

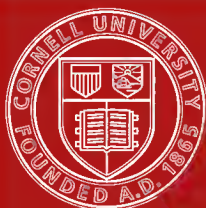


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THOMAS CARLYLE'S
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BIOGRAPHY.

BIOGRAPHY.¹

[1832.]

MAN'S sociality of nature evinces itself, in spite of all that can be said, with abundant evidence by this one fact, were there no other: the unspeakable delight he takes in Biography. It is written, 'The proper study of mankind is man;' to which study, let us candidly admit, he, by true or by false methods, applies himself, nothing loath. 'Man is 'perennially interesting to man; nay, if we look strictly to 'it, there is nothing else interesting.' How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature; to see into him, understand his goings-forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it; so that we can theoretically construe him, and could almost practically personate him; and do now thoroughly discern both what manner of man he is, and what manner of thing he has got to work on and live on!

A scientific interest and a poetic one alike inspire us in this matter. A scientific: because every mortal has a Problem of Existence set before him, which, were it only, what for the most it is, the Problem of keeping soul and body together, must be to a certain extent *original*, unlike every

¹ FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 27 (for April).—*The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*; including a *Tour to the Hebrides*. By James Boswell, Esq.—A new Edition, with numerous Additions and Notes, by John Wilson Croker, LL.D., F.R.S. 5 vols. London, 1831.

other; and yet, at the same time, so *like* every other; like our own, therefore; instructive, moreover, since we also are indentured to *live*. A poetic interest still more: for precisely this same struggle of human Freewill against material Necessity, which every man's Life, by the mere circumstance that the man continues alive, will more or less victoriously exhibit,—is that which above all else, or rather inclusive of all else, calls the Sympathy of mortal hearts into action; and whether as acted, or as represented and written of, not only is Poetry, but is the sole Poetry possible. Borne onwards by which two all-embracing interests, may the earnest Lover of Biography expand himself on all sides, and indefinitely enrich himself. Looking with the eyes of every new neighbour, he can discern a new world different for each: feeling with the heart of every neighbour, he lives with every neighbour's life, even as with his own. Of these millions of living men, each individual is a mirror to us; a mirror both scientific and poetic; or, if you will, both natural and magical;—from which one would so gladly draw aside the gauze veil; and, peering therein, discern the image of his own natural face, and the supernatural secrets that prophetically lie under the same!

Observe, accordingly, to what extent, in the actual course of things, this business of Biography is practised and relished. Define to thyself, judicious Reader, the real significance of these phenomena, named Gossip, Egoism, Personal Narrative (miraculous or not), Scandal, Raillery, Slander, and suchlike; the sum-total of which (with some fractional addition of a better ingredient, generally too small to be noticeable) constitutes that other grand phenomenon still called 'Conversation.' Do they not mean wholly: *Biography* and *Autobiography*? Not only in the common Speech of men; but in all Art too, which is or should be the concentrated and con-

served essence of what men can speak and show, Biography is almost the one thing needful.

Even in the highest works of Art, our interest, as the critics complain, is too apt to be strongly or even mainly of a Biographic sort. In the Art we can nowise forget the Artist: while looking on the *Transfiguration*, while studying the *Iliad*, we ever strive to figure to ourselves what spirit dwelt in Raphael; what a head was that of Homer, wherein, woven of Elysian light and Tartarean gloom, that old world fashioned itself together, of which these written Greek characters are but a feeble though perennial copy. The Painter and the Singer are present to us; we partially and for the time become the very Painter and the very Singer, while we enjoy the Picture and the Song. Perhaps too, let the critic say what he will, this is the highest enjoyment, the clearest recognition, we can have of these. Art indeed is Art; yet Man also is Man. Had the *Transfiguration* been painted without human hand; had it grown merely on the canvas, say by atmospheric influences, as lichen-pictures do on rocks,—it were a grand Picture doubtless; yet nothing like so grand as *the* Picture, which, on opening our eyes, we everywhere in Heaven and in Earth see painted; and everywhere pass over with indifference;—because the Painter was not a Man. Think of this; much lies in it. The Vatican is great; yet poor to Chimborazo or the Peak of Teneriffe: its dome is but a foolish Big-endian or Little-endian chip of an egg-shell, compared with that star-fretted Dome where Arcturus and Orion glance forever; which latter, notwithstanding, who looks at, save perhaps some necessitous stargazer bent to make Almanacs; some thick-quilted watchman, to see what weather it will prove? The Biographic interest is wanting: no Michael Angelo was He who built that ‘Temple of Immensity;’ therefore do we, pitiful Little-



nesses as we are, turn rather to wonder and to worship in the little toybox of a Temple built by our like.

Still more decisively, still more exclusively does the Biographic interest manifest itself, as we descend into lower regions of spiritual communication; through the whole range of what is called Literature. Of History, for example, the most honoured, if not honourable species of composition, is not the whole purport Biographic? 'History,' it has been said, 'is the essence of innumerable Biographies.' Such, at least, it should be: whether it is, might admit of question. But, in any case, what hope have we in turning over those old interminable Chronicles, with their garrulities and insipidities; or still worse, in patiently examining those modern Narrations, of the Philosophic kind, where 'Philosophy, teaching by Experience,' has to sit like owl on housetop, *seeing* nothing, *understanding* nothing, uttering only, with such solemnity, her perpetual most wearisome *hoo-hoo*:—what hope have we, except the for most part fallacious one of gaining some acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, though dead and vanished, yet dear to us; how they got along in those old days, suffering and doing; to what extent, and under what circumstances, they resisted the Devil and triumphed over him, or struck their colours to him, and were trodden under foot by him; how, in short, the perennial Battle went, which men name Life, which we also in these new days, with indifferent fortune, have to fight, and must bequeath to our sons and grandsons to go on fighting,—till the Enemy one day be quite vanquished and abolished, or else the great Night sink and part the combatants; and thus, either by some Millennium or some new Noah's Deluge, the Volume of Universal History wind itself up! Other hope, in studying such Books, we have none: and that it is a deceitful hope, who that has tried knows not? A feast

of widest Biographic insight is spread for us; we enter full of hungry anticipations: alas, like so many other feasts, which Life invites us to, a mere Ossian's 'feast of *shells*,'—the food and liquor being all emptied out and clean gone, and only the vacant dishes and deceitful emblems thereof left! Your modern Historical Restaurateurs are indeed little better than high-priests of Famine; that keep choicest china dinner-sets, only no dinner to serve therein. Yet such is our Biographic appetite, we run trying from shop to shop, with ever new hope; and, unless we could eat the wind, with ever new disappointment.

Again, consider the whole class of Fictitious Narratives; from the highest category of epic or dramatic Poetry, in Shakspeare and Homer, down to the lowest of froth Prose in the Fashionable Novel. What are all these but so many mimic Biographies? Attempts, here by an inspired Speaker, there by an uninspired Babbler, to deliver himself, more or less ineffectually, of the grand secret wherewith all hearts labour oppressed: The significance of Man's Life;—which deliverance, even as traced in the unfurnished head, and printed at the Minerva Press, finds readers. For, observe, though there is *a* greatest Fool, as a superlative in every kind; and *the* most Foolish man in the Earth is now indubitably living and breathing, and did this morning or lately eat breakfast, and is even now digesting the same; and looks out on the world with his dim horn-eyes, and inwardly forms some unspeakable theory thereof: yet where shall the authentically Existing be personally met with! Can one of us, otherwise than by guess, know that we have got sight of him, have orally communed with him? To take even the narrower sphere of this our English Metropolis, can any one confidently say to himself, that he has conversed with the identical, individual Stupidest man now extant in London?

No one. Deep as we dive in the Profound, there is ever a new depth opens: where the ultimate bottom may lie, through what new scenes of being we must pass before reaching it (except that we know it does lie somewhere, and might by human faculty and opportunity be reached), is altogether a mystery to us. Strange, tantalising pursuit! We have the fullest assurance, not only that there is a Stupidest of London men actually resident, with bed and board of some kind, in London; but that several persons have been or perhaps are now speaking face to face with him: while for us, chase it as we may, such scientific blessedness will too probably be forever denied!—But the thing we meant to enforce was this comfortable fact, that no known Head was so wooden, but there might be other heads to which it were a genius and Friar Bacon's Oracle. Of no given Book, not even of a Fashionable Novel, can you predicate with certainty that its vacuity is absolute; that there are not other vacuities which shall partially replenish themselves therefrom, and esteem it a *plenum*. How knowest thou, may the distressed Novelwright exclaim, that I, here where I sit, am the Foolishest of existing mortals; that this my Long-ear of a Fictitious Biography shall not find one and the other, into whose still longer ears it may be the means, under Providence, of instilling somewhat? We answer, None knows, none can certainly know: therefore, write on, worthy Brother, even as thou canst, even as it has been given thee.

Here, however, in regard to 'Fictitious Biographies,' and much other matter of like sort, which the greener mind in these days inditeth, we may as well insert some singular sentences on the importance and significance of *Reality*, as they stand written for us in Professor Gottfried Sauerteig's *Ästhetische Springwurzeln*; a Work, perhaps, as yet new to

most English readers. The Professor and Doctor is not a man whom we can praise without reservation; neither shall we say that his *Springwurzeln* (a sort of magical picklocks, as he affectedly names them) are adequate to ‘start’ every *bolt* that locks-up an æsthetic mystery: nevertheless, in his crabbed, one-sided way, he sometimes hits masses of the truth. We endeavour to translate faithfully, and trust the reader will find it worth serious perusal:

‘The significance, even for poetic purposes,’ says Sauer-teig, ‘that lies in REALITY is too apt to escape us; is perhaps only now beginning to be discerned. When we named *Rousseau’s Confessions* an elegiaco-didactic Poem, we meant more than an empty figure of speech; we meant a historical scientific fact.

‘Fiction, while the feigner of it knows that he is feigning, partakes, more than we suspect, of the nature of *lying*; and has ever an, in some degree, unsatisfactory character. All Mythologies were once Philosophies; were *believed*: the Epic Poems of old time, so long as they continued *epic*, and had any complete impressiveness, were Histories, and understood to be narratives of *facts*. In so far as Homer employed his gods as mere ornamental fringes, and had not himself, or at least did not expect his hearers to have, a belief that they were real agents in those antique doings; so far did he fail to be *genuine*; so far was he a partially *hollow* and false singer; and sang to please only a portion of man’s mind, not the whole thereof.

‘Imagination is, after all, but a poor matter when it has to part company with Understanding, and even front it hostilely in flat contradiction. Our mind is divided in twain: there is contest; wherein that which is weaker must needs come to the worse. Now of all feelings, states, principles, call it what you will, in man’s mind, is not Be-

‘ lief the clearest, strongest; against which all others contend in vain? Belief is, indeed, the beginning and first condition of all spiritual Force whatsoever: only in so far as Imagination, were it but momentarily, is *believed*, can there be any use or meaning in it, any enjoyment of it. And what is momentary Belief? The enjoyment of a moment. Whereas a perennial Belief were enjoyment perennially, and with the whole united soul.

‘ It is thus that I judge of the Supernatural in an Epic Poem; and would say, the instant it has ceased to be authentically supernatural, and become what you call “Machinery:” sweep it out of sight (*schaff’ es mir vom Halse*)! Of a truth, that same “Machinery,” about which the critics make such hubbub, was well named *Machinery*; for it is in very deed mechanical, nowise inspired or poetical. Neither for us is there the smallest æsthetic enjoyment in it; save only in this way; that we believe it *to have been believed*,—by the Singer or his Hearers; into whose case we now laboriously struggle to transport ourselves; and so, with stunted enough result, catch some reflex of the Reality, which for them was wholly real, and visible face to face. Whenever it has come so far that your “Machinery” is avowedly mechanical and unbelieved,—what is it else, if we dare tell ourselves the truth, but a miserable, meaningless Deception, kept-up by old use and wont alone? If the gods of an *Iliad* are to us no longer authentic Shapes of Terror, heart-stirring, heart-appalling, but only vague-glittering Shadows,—what must the dead Pagan gods of an *Epigoniad* be, the dead-living Pagan-Christian gods of a *Lusiad*, the concrete-abstract, evangelical-metaphysical gods of a *Paradise Lost*? Superannuated lumber! Cast raiment, at best; in which some poor mime, strutting and swaggering, may or may not set forth new noble

‘ Human Feelings (again a Reality), and so secure, or not
 ‘ secure, our pardon of such hoydenish masking; for which,
 ‘ in any case, he has a pardon to *ask*.

‘ True enough, none but the earliest Epic Poems can
 ‘ claim this distinction of entire credibility, of Reality: after
 ‘ an *Iliad*, a *Shaster*, a *Koran*, and other the like primitive
 ‘ performances, the rest seem, by this rule of mine, to be
 ‘ altogether excluded from the list. Accordingly, what *are*
 ‘ all the rest, from Virgil’s *Æneid* downwards, in compari-
 ‘ son? Frosty, artificial, heterogeneous things; more of
 ‘ gumflowers than of roses; at the best, of the two mixed
 ‘ incoherently together: to some of which, indeed, it were
 ‘ hard to deny the title of Poems; yet to no one of which
 ‘ can that title belong in any sense even resembling the old
 ‘ high one it, in those old days, conveyed,—when the epithet
 ‘ “divine” or “sacred” as applied to the uttered Word of
 ‘ man, was not a vain metaphor, a vain sound, but a real
 ‘ name with meaning. Thus, too, the farther we recede
 ‘ from those early days, when Poetry, as true Poetry is
 ‘ always, was still sacred or divine, and inspired (what ours,
 ‘ in great part, only pretends to be),—the more impossible
 ‘ becomes it to produce any, we say not true Poetry, but
 ‘ tolerable semblance of such; the hollower, in particular,
 ‘ grow all manner of Epics; till at length, as in this genera-
 ‘ tion, the very name of Epic sets men a-yawning, the an-
 ‘ nouncement of a new Epic is received as a public calamity.

‘ But what if the *impossible* being once for all quite dis-
 ‘ carded, the *probable* be well adhered to: how stands it with
 ‘ fiction *then*? Why, then, I would say, the evil is much
 ‘ mended, but nowise completely cured. We have then,
 ‘ in place of the wholly dead modern Epic, the partially
 ‘ living modern Novel; to which latter it is much easier
 ‘ to lend that above mentioned, so essential “momentary

‘ credence” than to the former: indeed, infinitely easier; for the former being flatly incredible, no mortal *can* for a moment credit it, for a moment enjoy it. Thus, here and there, a *Tom Jones*, a *Meister*, a *Crusoe*, will yield no little solacement to the minds of men; though still immeasurably less than a *Reality* would, were the significance thereof as impressively unfolded, were the genius that could so unfold it once given us by the kind Heavens. Neither say thou that proper Realities are wanting: for Man’s Life, now, as of old, is the genuine work of God; wherever there is a Man, a God also is revealed, and all that is Godlike: a whole epitome of the Infinite, with its meanings, lies enfolded in the Life of every Man. Only, alas, that the Seer to discern this same Godlike, and with fit utterance *unfold* it for us, is wanting, and may long be wanting!

‘ Nay, a question arises on us here, wherein the whole German reading-world will eagerly join: Whether man *can* any longer be so interested by the spoken Word, as he often was in those primeval days, when rapt away by its inscrutable power, he pronounced it, in such dialect as he had, to be *transcendental* (to *transcend* all measure), to be sacred, prophetic and the inspiration of a god? For myself, I (*ich meines Ortes*), by faith or by insight, do heartily understand that the answer to such question will be, Yea! For never that I could in searching find out, has Man been, by Time which devours so much, deprived of any faculty whatsoever that he in any era was possessed of. To my seeming, the babe born yesterday has all the organs of Body, Soul and Spirit, and in exactly the same combination and entireness, that the oldest Pelasgic Greek, or Mesopotamian Patriarch, or Father Adam himself could boast of. Ten fingers, one heart with venous and arterial blood therein, still belong to man that is born of woman: when

‘ did he lose any of his spiritual Endowments either; above all, his highest spiritual Endowment, that of revealing Poetic Beauty, and of adequately receiving the same? Not the material, not the susceptibility is wanting; only the Poet, or long series of Poets, to work on these. True, alas too true, the Poet is still utterly wanting, or all but utterly: nevertheless have we not centuries enough before us to produce him in? Him and much else!—I, for the present, will but predict that chiefly by working more and more on REALITY, and evolving more and more wisely *its* inexhaustible meanings; and, in brief, speaking forth in fit utterance whatsoever our whole soul *believes*, and ceasing to speak forth what thing soever our whole soul does not believe,—will this high emprise be accomplished, or approximated to.’

These notable, and not unfounded, though partial and *deep*-seeing rather than *wide*-seeing observations on the great import of REALITY, considered even as a poetic material, we have inserted the more willingly, because a transient feeling to the same purpose may often have suggested itself to many readers; and, on the whole, it is good that every reader and every writer understand, with all intensity of conviction, what quite infinite worth lies in *Truth*; how all-pervading, omnipotent, in man’s mind, is the thing we name *Belief*. For the rest, Herr Sauerteig, though one-sided, on this matter of Reality, seems heartily persuaded, and is not perhaps so ignorant as he looks. It cannot be unknown to him, for example, what noise is made about ‘Invention;’ what a supreme rank this faculty is reckoned to hold in the poetic endowment. Great truly is Invention; nevertheless, that is but a poor exercise of it with which Belief is not concerned. ‘An Irishman with whisky in his head,’ as poor Byron said, will invent you, in this kind, till there is enough

and to spare. Nay, perhaps, if we consider well, the highest exercise of Invention has, in very deed, nothing to do with Fiction; but is an invention of new Truth, what we can call a Revelation; which last does undoubtedly transcend all other poetic efforts, nor can Herr Sauerteig be too loud in its praises. But, on the other hand, whether such effort is still possible for man, Herr Sauerteig and the bulk of the world are probably at issue;—and will probably continue so till that same ‘Revelation,’ or new ‘Invention of Reality,’ of the sort he desiderates, shall itself make its appearance.

Meanwhile, quitting these airy regions, let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious event*; what an incalculable force lies for us in this consideration: The Thing which I here hold imaged in my mind did actually occur; was, in very truth, an element in the system of the All, whereof I too form part; had therefore, and has, through all time, an authentic being; is not a dream, but a reality! We ourselves can remember reading, in *Lord Clarendon*,² with feelings perhaps somehow accidentally opened to it,—certainly with a depth of impression strange to us then and now,—that insignificant-looking passage, where Charles, after the battle of Worcester, glides down, with Squire Careless, from the Royal Oak, at nightfall, being hungry: how, ‘making a shift to get over hedges and ditches, after ‘walking at least eight or nine miles, which were the more ‘grievous to the King by the weight of his boots (for he ‘could not put *them* off when he cut off his hair, for want ‘of shoes), before morning they came to a *poor cottage, the ‘owner whereof, being a Roman Catholic, was known to Careless.*’ How this poor drudge, being knocked-up from his snoring, ‘carried them into a little barn full of hay, which was a

² *History of the Rebellion*, iii. 625.

‘better lodging than he had for himself;’ and by and by, not without difficulty, brought his Majesty ‘a piece of bread and a great pot of buttermilk,’ saying candidly that “he himself lived by his daily labour, and that what he had brought him was the fare he and his wife had:” on which nourishing diet his Majesty, ‘staying upon the haymow,’ feeds thankfully for two days; and then departs, under new guidance, having first changed clothes, down to the very shirt and ‘old pair of shoes,’ with his landlord; and so, as worthy Bunyan has it, ‘goes on his way, and sees him no more.’ Singular enough, if we will think of it! This, then, was a genuine flesh-and-blood Rustic of the year 1651: he did actually swallow bread and buttermilk (not having ale and bacon), and do field-labour: with these hobnailed ‘shoes’ has sprawled through mud-roads in winter, and, jocund or not, driven his team a-field in summer: he made bargains; had chafferings and higgings, now a sore heart, now a glad one; was born; was a son, was a father; toiled in many ways, being forced to it, till the strength was all worn out of him; and then—lay down ‘to rest his galled back,’ and sleep there till the long-distant morning!—How comes it, that he alone of all the British rustics who tilled and lived along with him, on whom the blessed sun on that same ‘fifth day of September’ was shining, should have chanced to rise on us; that this poor pair of clouted Shoes, out of the million million hides that have been tanned, and cut, and worn, should still subsist, and hang visibly together? We see him but for a moment; for one moment, the blanket of the Night is rent asunder, so that we behold and see, and then closes over him—forever.

So too, in some *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, how indelible and magically bright does many a little *Reality* dwell in our remembrance! There is no need that the personages on

the scene be a King and Clown; that the scene be the Forest of the Royal Oak, 'on the borders of Staffordshire:' need only that the scene lie on this old firm Earth of ours, where we also have so surprisingly arrived; that the personages be *men*, and *seen* with the eyes of a man. Foolish enough, how some slight, perhaps mean and even ugly incident, if *real* and well presented, will fix itself in a susceptible memory, and lie ennobled there; silvered over with the pale cast of thought, with the pathos which belongs only to the Dead. For the Past is all holy to us; the Dead are all holy, even they that were base and wicked while alive. Their baseness and wickedness was not *They*, was but the heavy and unmanageable Environment that lay round them, with which they fought unprevailing: *they* (the ethereal god-given Force that dwelt in them, and was their *Self*) have now shuffled-off that heavy Environment, and are free and pure: their life-long Battle, go how it might, is all ended, with many wounds or with fewer; they have been recalled from it, and the once harsh-jarring battle-field has become a silent awe-inspiring Golgotha, and *Gottesacker* (Field of God)!—Boswell relates this in itself smallest and poorest of occurrences: 'As we walked along the Strand ' tonight, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us in ' the usual enticing manner. "No, no, my girl," said John- ' son; "it won't do." He, however, did not treat her with ' harshness; and we talked of the wretched life of such ' women.' Strange power of *Reality*! Not even this poorest of occurrences, but now, after seventy years are come and gone, has a meaning for us. Do but consider that it is *true*; that it did in very deed occur! That unhappy Outcast, with all her sins and woes, her lawless desires, too complex mischances, her wailings and her riotings, has departed utterly; alas! her siren finery has got all besmudged,

ground, generations since, into dust and smoke; of her degraded body, and whole miserable earthly existence, all is away: *she* is no longer here, but far from us, in the bosom of Eternity,—whence we too came, whither we too are bound! Johnson said, “No, no, my girl; it won’t do;” and then ‘we talked;’—and herewith the wretched one, seen but for the twinkling of an eye, passes on into the utter Darkness. No high Calista, that ever issued from Story-teller’s brain, will impress us more deeply than this meanest of the mean; and for a good reason: That *she* issued from the Maker of Men.

It is well worth the Artist’s while to examine for himself what it is that gives such pitiful incidents their memorableness; his aim likewise is, above all things, to be *memorable*. Half the effect, we already perceive, depends on the object; on its being *real*, on its being really *seen*. The other half will depend on the observer; and the question now is: How are real objects to be *so* seen; on what quality of observing, or of style in describing, does this so intense pictorial power depend? Often a slight circumstance contributes curiously to the result: some little, and perhaps to appearance accidental, feature is presented; a light-gleam, which instantaneously *excites* the mind, and urges it to complete the picture, and evolve the meaning thereof for itself. By critics, such light-gleams and their almost magical influence have frequently been noted: but the power to produce such, to select such features as will produce them, is generally treated as a knack, or trick of the trade, a secret for being ‘graphic;’ whereas these magical feats are, in truth, rather inspirations; and the gift of performing them, which acts unconsciously, without forethought, and as if by nature alone, is properly a *genius* for description.

One grand, invaluable secret there is, however, which

includes all the rest, and, what is comfortable, lies clearly in every man's power: *To have an open loving heart, and what follows from the possession of such.* Truly it has been said, emphatically in these days ought it to be repeated: A loving Heart is the beginning of all Knowledge. This it is that opens the whole mind, quickens every faculty of the intellect to do its fit work, that of *knowing*; and therefrom, by sure consequence, of *vividly uttering-forth*. Other secret for being 'graphic' is there none, worth having: but this is an all-sufficient one. See, for example, what a small Boswell can do! Hereby, indeed, is the whole man made a living mirror, wherein the wonders of this ever-wonderful Universe are, in their true light (which is ever a magical, miraculous one) represented, and reflected back on us. It has been said, 'the heart sees farther than the head:' but, indeed, without the seeing heart, there is no true seeing for the head so much as possible; all is mere *oversight*, hallucination and vain superficial phantasmagoria, which can permanently profit no one.

Here, too, may we not pause for an instant, and make a practical reflection? Considering the multitude of mortals that handle the Pen in these days, and can mostly spell, and write without glaring violations of grammar, the question naturally arises: How is it, then, that no Work proceeds from them, bearing any stamp of authenticity and permanence; of worth for more than one day? Ship-loads of Fashionable Novels, Sentimental Rhymes, Tragedies, Farces, Diaries of Travel, Tales by flood and field, are swallowed monthly into the bottomless Pool: still does the Press toil; innumerable Paper-makers, Compositors, Printers' Devils, Book-binders, and Hawkers grown hoarse with loud proclaiming, rest not from their labour; and still, in torrents, rushes on the great array of Publications, unpausing, to their

final home; and still Oblivion, like the Grave, cries, Give! Give! How is it that of all these countless multitudes, no one can attain to the smallest mark of excellence, or produce aught that shall endure longer than 'snow-flake on the river,' or the foam of penny-beer? We answer: Because they *are* foam; because there is no *Reality* in them. These Three Thousand men, women and children, that make up the army of British Authors, do not, if we will well consider it, *see* anything whatever; consequently *have* nothing that they can record and utter, only more or fewer things that they can plausibly pretend to record. The Universe, of Man and Nature, is still quite shut-up from them; the 'open secret' still utterly a secret; because no sympathy with Man or Nature, no love and free simplicity of heart has yet unfolded the same. Nothing but a pitiful Image of their own pitiful Self, with its vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds, hangs forever painted in the retina of these unfortunate persons; so that the starry ALL, with whatsoever it embraces, does but appear as some expanded magic-lantern shadow of that same Image,—and naturally looks pitiful enough.

It is vain for these persons to allege that they are naturally without gift, naturally stupid and sightless, and so *can* attain to no knowledge of anything; therefore, in writing of anything, must needs write falsehoods of it, there being in it no truth for them. Not so, good Friends. The stupidest of you has a certain faculty; were it but that of articulate speech (say, in the Scottish, the Irish, the Cockney dialect, or even in 'Governess-English'), and of physically discerning what lies under your nose. The stupidest of you would perhaps grudge to be compared in faculty with James Boswell; yet see what he has produced! You do not use your faculty honestly; your heart is shut up; full of greediness,

malice, discontent; so your intellectual sense cannot be open. It is vain also to urge that James Boswell had opportunities; saw great men and great things, such as you can never hope to look on. What make ye of Parson White in Selborne? He had not only no great men to look on, but not even men; merely sparrows and cock-chafers: yet has he left us a *Biography* of these; which, under its title *Natural History of Selborne*, still remains valuable to us; which has copied a little sentence or two *faithfully* from the Inspired Volume of Nature, and so is itself not without inspiration. Go ye and do likewise. Sweep away utterly all frothiness and falsehood from your heart; struggle unweariedly to acquire, what is possible for every god-created Man, a free, open, humble soul: *speak not at all, in any wise, till you have somewhat to speak*; care not for the *reward* of your speaking, but simply and with undivided mind for the *truth* of your speaking: then be placed in what section of Space and of Time soever, do but open your eyes, and they shall actually *see*, and bring you real *knowledge*, wondrous, worthy of *belief*; and instead of one Boswell and one White, the world will rejoice in a thousand,—stationed on their thousand several watch-towers, to instruct us by indubitable documents, of whatsoever in our so stupendous World comes to light and *is*! O, had the Editor of this Magazine but a magic rod to turn all that not inconsiderable Intellect, which now deluges us with artificial fictitious soap-lather, and mere Lying, into the faithful study of Reality,—what knowledge of great, everlasting Nature, and of Man's ways and doings therein, would not every year bring us in! Can we but change one single soap-latherer and mountebank Juggler, into a true Thinker and Doer, who even *tries* honestly to think and do,—great will be our reward.

But to return; or rather from this point to begin our

journey! If now, what with Herr Sauerteig's *Springwurzeln*, what with so much lucubration of our own, it have become apparent how deep, immeasurable is the 'worth that lies in *Reality*,' and farther, how exclusive the interest which man takes in Histories of Man,—may it not seem lamentable, that so few genuinely good *Biographies* have yet been accumulated in Literature; that in the whole world, one cannot find, going strictly to work, above some dozen, or baker's dozen, and those chiefly of very ancient date? Lamentable; yet, after what we have just seen, accountable. Another question might be asked: How comes it that in England we have simply one good Biography, this *Boswell's Johnson*; and of good, indifferent, or even bad attempts at Biography, fewer than any civilised people? Consider the French and Germans, with their Moreris, Bayles, Jördenses, Jöchers, their innumerable *Mémoires*, and *Schilderungen*, and *Biographies Universelles*; not to speak of Rousseaus, Goethes, Schubarts, Jung-Stillings: and then contrast with these our poor Birches and Kippises and Pecks; the whole breed of whom, moreover, is now extinct!

With this question, as the answer might lead us far, and come out unflattering to patriotic sentiment, we shall not intermeddle; but turn rather, with great pleasure, to the fact, that one excellent Biography is actually English;—and even now lies, in Five new Volumes, at our hand, soliciting a new consideration from us; such as, age after age (the Perennial showing ever new phases as *our* position alters), it may long be profitable to bestow on it;—to which task we here, in this position, in this age, gladly address ourselves.

First, however, let the foolish April-fool Day pass by; and our Reader, during these twenty-nine days of uncertain weather that will follow, keep pondering, according to con-

venience, the purport of BIOGRAPHY in general: then, with the blessed dew of May-day, and in unlimited convenience of space, shall all that we have written on *Johnson* and *Boswell's Johnson* and *Croker's Boswell's Johnson* be faithfully laid before him.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.¹

[1832.]

ÆSOP'S Fly, sitting on the axle of the chariot, has been much laughed at for exclaiming: What a dust I do raise! Yet which of us, in his way, has not sometimes been guilty of the like? Nay, so foolish are men, they often, standing at ease and as spectators on the highway, will volunteer to exclaim of the Fly (not being tempted to it, as *he* was) exactly to the same purport: What a dust *thou* dost raise! Smallest of mortals, when mounted aloft by circumstances, come to seem great; smallest of phenomena connected with them are treated as important, and must be sedulously scanned, and commented upon with loud emphasis.

That Mr. Croker should undertake to edit *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, was a praiseworthy but no miraculous procedure: neither could the accomplishment of such undertaking be, in an epoch like ours, anywise regarded as an event in Universal History; the right or the wrong accomplishment thereof was, in very truth, one of the most insignificant of things. However, it sat in a great environment, on the axle of a high, fast-rolling, parliamentary chariot; and all the world has exclaimed over it, and the author of it: What a dust thou dost raise! List to the Reviews, and 'Organs

¹ FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 28.—*The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.; including a Tour to the Hebrides.* By James Boswell, Esq.—A new Edition, with numerous Additions and Notes, by John Wilson Croker, LL.D., F.R.S. 5 vols. London, 1831.

of Public Opinion,' from the *National Omnibus* upwards: criticisms, vituperative and laudatory, stream from their thousand throats of brass and of leather; here chanting *Io-pæans*; there grating harsh thunder or vehement shrewmouse squeaklets; till the general ear is filled, and nigh deafened. Boswell's Book had a noiseless birth, compared with this Edition of Boswell's Book. On the other hand, consider with what degree of tumult *Paradise Lost* and the *Iliad* were ushered in!

To swell such clamour, or prolong it beyond the time, seems nowise our vocation here. At most, perhaps, we are bound to inform simple readers, with all possible brevity, what manner of performance and Edition this is; especially, whether, in our poor judgment, it is worth laying out three pounds sterling upon, yea or not. The whole business belongs distinctly to the lower ranks of the trivial class.

Let us admit, then, with great readiness, that as Johnson once said, and the Editor repeats, 'all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less;' that, accordingly, a new Edition of Boswell was desirable; and that Mr. Croker has given one. For this task he had various qualifications: his own voluntary resolution to do it; his high place in society, unlocking all manner of archives to him; not less, perhaps, a certain anecdotico-biographic turn of mind, natural or acquired; we mean, a love for the *minuter* events of History, and talent for investigating these. Let us admit too, that he has been very diligent; seems to have made inquiries perseveringly far and near; as well as drawn freely from his own ample stores; and so tells us, to appearance quite accurately, much that he has not found lying on the highways, but has had to seek and dig for. Numerous persons, chiefly of quality, rise to view in these Notes; when and also where they came

into this world, received office or promotion, died and were buried (only what they *did*, except digest, remaining often too mysterious),—is faithfully enough set down. Whereby all that their various and doubtless widely-scattered Tombstones could have taught us, is here presented, at once, in a bound Book. Thus is an indubitable conquest, though a small one, gained over our great enemy, the all-destroyer Time; and as such shall have welcome.

Nay, let us say that the spirit of Diligence, exhibited in this department, seems to attend the Editor honestly throughout: he keeps everywhere a watchful outlook on his Text; reconciling the distant with the present, or at least indicating and regretting their irreconcilability; elucidating, smoothing down; in all ways exercising, according to ability, a strict editorial superintendence. Any little Latin or even Greek phrase is rendered into English, in general with perfect accuracy; citations are verified, or else corrected. On all hands, moreover, there is a certain spirit of Decency maintained and insisted on: if not good morals, yet good manners, are rigidly inculcated; if not Religion, and a devout Christian heart, yet Orthodoxy, and a cleanly Shovel-hatted look,—which, as compared with flat Nothing, is something very considerable. Grant too, as no contemptible triumph of this latter spirit, that though the Editor is known as a decided Politician and Party-man, he has carefully subdued all temptations to transgress in that way: except by quite involuntary indications, and rather as it were the pervading temper of the whole, you could not discover on which side of the Political Warfare he is enlisted and fights. This, as we said, is a great triumph of the Decency-principle: for this, and for these other graces and performances, let the Editor have all praise.

Herewith, however, must the praise unfortunately ter-

minate. Diligence, Fidelity, Decency, are good and indispensable: yet, without Faculty, without Light, they will not do the work. Along with that Tombstone-information, perhaps even without much of it, we could have liked to gain some answer, in one way or other, to this wide question: What and how was *English Life* in Johnson's time; wherein has ours grown to differ therefrom? In other words: What things have we to forget, what to fancy and remember, before we, from such distance, can put ourselves in Johnson's *place*; and so, in the full sense of the term, *understand* him, his sayings and his doings? This was indeed specially the problem which a Commentator and Editor had to solve: a complete solution of it should have lain in him, his whole mind should have been filled and prepared with perfect insight into it; then, whether in the way of express Dissertation, of incidental Exposition and Indication, opportunities enough would have occurred of bringing out the same: what was dark in the figure of the Past had thereby been enlightened; Boswell had, not in show and word only, but in very fact, been made *new* again, readable to us who are divided from him, even as he was to those close at hand. Of all which very little has been attempted here; accomplished, we should say, next to nothing, or altogether nothing.

Excuse, no doubt, is in readiness for such omission; and, indeed, for innumerable other failings;—as where, for example, the Editor will punctually explain what is already sun-clear; and then anon, not without frankness, declare frequently enough that 'the Editor does not understand,' that 'the Editor cannot guess,'—while, for most part, the Reader cannot help both guessing and seeing. Thus, if Johnson say, in one sentence, that 'English names should not be used in Latin verses;' and then, in the next sentence,

speak blamingly of 'Carteret being used as a dactyl,' will the generality of mortals detect any puzzle there? Or again, where poor Boswell writes: 'I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France: "*Ma foi, monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule;*"'—though the Turkish lady here speaks English-French, where is the call for a Note like this: 'Mr. Boswell no doubt fancied these words had some meaning, or he would hardly have quoted them: but what that meaning is, the Editor cannot guess'? The Editor is clearly no witch at a riddle.—For these and all kindred deficiencies the excuse, as we said, is at hand; but the fact of their existence is not the less certain and regrettable.

Indeed it, from a very early stage of the business, becomes afflictively apparent, how much the Editor, so well furnished with all external appliances and means, is from within unfurnished with means for forming to himself any just notion of Johnson, or of Johnson's Life; and therefore of speaking on that subject with much hope of edifying. Too lightly is it from the first taken for granted that *Hunger*, the great basis of our life, is also its apex and ultimate perfection; that as 'Neediness and Greediness and Vainglory' are the chief qualities of most men, so no man, not even a Johnson, acts or can think of acting on any other principle. Whatsoever, therefore, cannot be referred to the two former categories (Need and Greed), is without scruple ranged under the latter. It is here properly that our Editor becomes burdensome; and, to the weaker sort, even a nuisance. "What good is it," will such cry, "when we had still some faint shadow of belief that man was better than a selfish Digesting-machine, what good is it to poke in, at every turn, and explain how this and that which we thought noble in old Samuel, was vulgar, base; that for him too

there was no reality but in the Stomach; and except Pudding, and the finer species of pudding which is named Praise, life had no pabulum? Why, for instance, when we know that Johnson *loved* his good Wife, and says expressly that their marriage was ‘a love-match on both sides,’—should two closed lips open to tell us only this: ‘Is it not possible that the obvious advantage of having a woman of experience to superintend an establishment of this kind (the ‘Edial School) may have contributed to a match so disproportionate in point of age?—ED.’? Or again when, in the Text, the honest cynic speaks freely of his former poverty, and it is known that he once lived on fourpence-halfpenny a-day,—need a Commentator advance, and comment thus: ‘When we find Dr. Johnson tell unpleasant truths to, or of, other men, let us recollect that he does not appear to have spared himself, on occasions in which he might be forgiven for doing so’? Why in short,” continues the exasperated Reader, “should Notes of this species stand affronting me, when there might have been no Note at all?”—Gentle Reader, we answer, Be not wroth. What other could an honest Commentator do, than give thee the best he had? Such was the picture and theorem he had fashioned for himself of the world and of man’s doings therein: take it, and draw wise inferences from it. If there did exist a Leader of Public Opinion, and Champion of Orthodoxy in the Church of Jesus of Nazareth, who reckoned that man’s glory consisted in not being poor; and that a Sage, and Prophet of his time, must needs blush because the world had paid him at that easy rate of fourpence-halfpenny *per diem*,—was not the fact of such existence worth knowing, worth considering?

Of a much milder hue, yet to us practically of an all-defacing, and for the present enterprise quite ruinous character,—is another grand fundamental failing; the last we

shall feel ourselves obliged to take the pain of specifying here. It is, that our Editor has fatally, and almost surprisingly, mistaken the limits of an Editor's function; and so, instead of working on the margin with his Pen, to elucidate as best might be, strikes boldly into the body of the page with his Scissors, and there clips at discretion! Four Books Mr. C. had by him, wherëfrom to gather light for the fifth, which was Boswell's. What does he do but now, in the placidest manner,—slit the whole five into slips, and sew these together into a *sextum quid*, exactly at his own convenience; giving Boswell the credit of the whole! By what art-magic, our readers ask, has he united them? By the simplest of all: by Brackets. Never before was the full virtue of the Bracket made manifest. You begin a sentence under Boswell's guidance, thinking to be carried happily through it by the same: but no; in the middle, perhaps after your semicolon, and some consequent 'for,'—starts up one of these Bracket-ligatures, and stitches you in from half a page to twenty or thirty pages of a Hawkins, Tyers, Murphy, Piozzi; so that often one must make the old sad reflection, Where we are, we know; whither we are going, no man knoweth! It is truly said also, There is much between the cup and the lip; but here the case is still sadder: for not till after consideration can you ascertain, now when the cup is *at* the lip, what liquor it is you are imbibing; whether Boswell's French wine which you began with, or some Piozzi's ginger-beer, or Hawkins's entire, or perhaps some other great Brewer's penny-swipes or even alegar, which has been surreptitiously substituted instead thereof. A situation almost original; not to be tried a second time! But, in fine, what ideas Mr. Croker entertains of a literary *whole* and the thing called *Book*, and how the very Printer's Devils did

not rise in mutiny against such a conglomeration as this, and refuse to print it,—may remain a problem.

And now happily our say is said. All faults, the Moralists tell us, are properly *shortcomings*; crimes themselves are nothing other than a *not doing enough*; a *fighting*, but with defective vigour. How much more a mere insufficiency, and this after good efforts, in handicraft practice! Mr. Croker says: ‘The worst that can happen is that all ‘ the present Editor has contributed may, if the reader so ‘ pleases, be rejected as *surplusage*.’ It is our pleasant duty to take with hearty welcome what he has given; and render thanks even for what he meant to give. Next and finally, it is our painful duty to declare, aloud if that be necessary, that his gift, as weighed against the hard money which the Booksellers demand for giving it you, is (in our judgment) very greatly the lighter. No portion, accordingly, of our small floating capital has been embarked in the business, or shall ever be; indeed, were we in the market for such a thing, there is simply *no* Edition of *Boswell* to which this last would seem preferable. And now enough, and more than enough!

We have next a word to say of James Boswell. Boswell has already been much commented upon; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation than of true recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world; confessed that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety; of which latter as he gained far more than seemed his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived, and had bed and board, in the British Islands, this man has pro-

vided us a greater *pleasure* than any other individual, at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves; perhaps has done us a greater *service* than can be specially attributed to more than two or three: yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copyright went) was not excessive; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him. Men are unwiser than children; they do *not* know the hand that feeds them.

Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the Time he lived in; were far from common then; indeed, in such a degree, were almost unexampled; not recognisable therefore by every one; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to, and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and gross liver; gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler; had much of the sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced too with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb; that he gloried much when the Tailor, by a court-suit, had made a new man of him; that he appeared at the Shakspeare Jubilee with a riband, imprinted 'CORSICA BOSWELL,' round his hat; and in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without doing and saying more than one pretentious ineptitude: all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff-up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like

half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more; in that coarsely-protruded shelf-mouth, that fat dewlapped chin; in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough; much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *flunkie*), though it had been more natural there? The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine good lay in him was nowise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual Notabilities, that he loved such, and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinleck's phraseology) "took on with Paoli;" and then being off with "the Corsican landlouser," took on with a schoolmaster, "ane that keeped a schule, and ca'd it an academy:" that he did all this, and could not help doing it, we account a very singular merit. The man, once for all, had an 'open sense,' an open loving heart, which so few have: where Excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulphur-brand of a Laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it,—if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey, better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of Excellence had not only such an evil *nature* to triumph over; but also what an *education* and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish Laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English Dominie! Your Scottish Laird, says an English naturalist of these days, may be defined as

the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known. Boswell too was a Tory; of quite peculiarly feudal, genealogical, pragmatistical temper; had been nurtured in an atmosphere of Heraldry, at the feet of a very Gamaliel in that kind; within bare walls, adorned only with pedigrees, amid serving-men in threadbare livery; all things teaching him, from birth upwards, to remember that a Laird was a Laird. Perhaps there was a special vanity in his very blood: old Auchinleck had, if not the gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow-stalking, contentious, hissing vanity of the gander; a still more fatal species. Scottish Advocates will yet tell you how the ancient man, having chanced to be the first sheriff appointed (after the abolition of 'hereditary jurisdictions') by royal authority, was wont, in dull-snuffing pompous tone, to preface many a deliverance from the bench with these words: "I, the first King's Sheriff in Scotland."

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so prepossessed and held back by nature and by art, fly nevertheless like iron to its magnet, whither his better genius called! You may surround the iron and the magnet with what enclosures and encumbrances you please,—with wood, with rubbish, with brass: it matters not, the two feel each other, they struggle restlessly towards each other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and 'gigmanity';² the magnet an English plebeian, and moving rag-and-dust mountain, coarse, proud, irascible, imperious: nevertheless, behold how they embrace, and inseparably cleave to one another! It is one of the strangest phenomena of the past century, that at a time when the old reverent feeling

² 'Q. What do you mean by "respectable"?—A. He always kept a gig.' (*Thur-tell's Trial*).—'Thus,' it has been said, 'does society naturally divide itself into four classes: Noblemen, Gentlemen, Gigmen and Men.'

of Discipleship (such as brought men from far countries, with rich gifts, and prostrate soul, to the feet of the Prophets) had passed utterly away from men's practical experience, and was no longer surmised to exist (as it does), perennial, indestructible, in man's inmost heart,—James Boswell should have been the individual, of all others, predestined to recall it, in such singular guise, to the wondering, and, for a long while, laughing and unrecognising world. It has been commonly said, The man's vulgar vanity was all that attached him to Johnson; he delighted to be seen near him, to be thought connected with him. Now let it be at once granted that no consideration springing out of vulgar vanity could well be absent from the mind of James Boswell, in this his intercourse with Johnson, or in any considerable transaction of his life. At the same time, ask yourself: Whether such vanity, and nothing else, actuated him therein; whether this was the true essence and moving principle of the phenomenon, or not rather its outward vesture, and the accidental environment (and defacement) in which it came to light? The man was, by nature and habit, vain; a sycophant-coxcomb, be it granted: but had there been nothing more than vanity in him, was Samuel Johnson the man of men to whom he must attach himself? At the date when Johnson was a poor rusty-coated 'scholar,' dwelling in Temple-lane, and indeed throughout their whole intercourse afterwards, were there not chancellors and prime ministers enough; graceful gentlemen, the glass of fashion; honour-giving noblemen; dinner-giving rich men; renowned fire-eaters, swordsmen, gownsmen; Quacks and Realities of all hues,—any one of whom bulked much larger in the world's eye than Johnson ever did? To any one of whom, by half that submissive-ness and assiduity, our Bozzy might have recommended himself; and sat there, the envy of surrounding lickspittles;

pocketing now solid emolument, swallowing now well-cooked viands and wines of rich vintage; in each case, also, shone on by some glittering reflex of Renown or Notoriety, so as to be the observed of innumerable observers. To no one of whom, however, though otherwise a most diligent solicitor and purveyor, did he so attach himself: such vulgar courtierships were his paid drudgery, or leisure amusement; the worship of Johnson was his grand, ideal, voluntary business. Does not the frothy-hearted yet enthusiastic man, doffing his Advocate's-wig, regularly take post, and hurry up to London, for the sake of his Sage chiefly; as to a Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibber dives into Bolt Court, to sip muddy coffee with a cynical old man, and a sour-tempered blind old woman (feeling the cups, whether they are full, with her finger); and patiently endures contradictions without end; too happy so he may but be allowed to listen and live. Nay, it does not appear that vulgar vanity could ever have been much flattered by Boswell's relation to Johnson. Mr. Croker says, Johnson was, to the last, little regarded by the great world; from which, for a vulgar vanity, all honour, as from its fountain, descends. Bozzy, even among Johnson's friends and special admirers, seems rather to have been laughed at than envied: his officious, whisking, consequential ways, the daily reproofs and rebuffs he underwent, could gain from the world no golden but only leaden opinions. His devout Discipleship seemed nothing more than a mean Spanielship, in the general eye. His mighty 'constellation,' or sun, round whom he, as satellite, observantly gyrated, was, for the mass of men, but a huge ill-snuffed tallow-light, and he a weak night-moth, circling foolishly, dangerously about it, not knowing what he wanted. If he enjoyed Highland dinners and toasts, as henchman to

a new sort of chieftain, Henry Erskine, in the domestic 'Outer-House,' could hand him a shilling "for the sight of his Bear." Doubtless the man was laughed at, and often heard himself laughed at for his Johnsonism. To be envied is the grand and sole aim of vulgar vanity; to be filled with good things is that of sensuality: for Johnson perhaps no man living *envied* poor Bozzy; and of good things (except himself paid for them) there was no vestige in that acquaintanceship. Had nothing other or better than vanity and sensuality been there, Johnson and Boswell had never come together, or had soon and finally separated again.

In fact, the so copious terrestrial dross that welters chaotically, as the outer sphere of this man's character, does but render for us more remarkable, more touching, the celestial spark of goodness, of light, and Reverence for Wisdom, which dwelt in the interior, and could struggle through such encumbrances, and in some degree illuminate and beautify them. There is much lying yet undeveloped in the love of Boswell for Johnson. A cheering proof, in a time which else utterly wanted and still wants such, that living Wisdom is quite *infinitely* precious to man, is the symbol of the God-like to him, which even weak eyes may discern; that Loyalty, Discipleship, all that was ever meant by *Hero-worship*, lives perennially in the human bosom, and waits, even in these dead days, only for occasions to unfold it, and inspire all men with it, and again make the world alive! James Boswell we can regard as a practical witness, or real *martyr*, to this high everlasting truth. A wonderful martyr, if you will; and in a time which made such martyrdom doubly wonderful: yet the time and its martyr perhaps suited each other. For a decrepit, death-sick Era, when CANT had first decisively opened her poison-breathing lips to proclaim that God-worship and Mammon-worship were one and the same,

that Life was a *Lie*, and the Earth Beelzebub's, which the *Supreme Quack* should inherit; and so all things were fallen into the yellow leaf, and fast hastening to noisome corruption: for such an Era, perhaps no better Prophet than a parti-coloured Zany-Prophet, concealing, from himself and others, his prophetic significance in such unexpected vestures,—was deserved, or would have been in place. A precious medicine lay hidden in floods of coarsest, most composite treacle: the world swallowed the treacle, for it suited the world's palate; and now, after half a century, may the medicine also begin to show itself! James Boswell belonged, in his corruptible part, to the lowest classes of mankind; a foolish, inflated creature, swimming in an element of self-conceit: but in his corruptible there dwelt an incorruptible, all the more impressive and indubitable for the strange lodging it had taken.

Consider too, with what force, diligence and vivacity he has rendered back all this which, in Johnson's neighbourhood, his 'open sense' had so eagerly and freely taken in. That loose-flowing, careless-looking Work of his is as a picture by one of Nature's own Artists; the best possible resemblance of a Reality; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was: let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point; the picture must and will be genuine. How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love, and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomises nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, by little and little, unconsciously works together for us a whole *Johnsoniad*; a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man! Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled; indeed, in many senses, this also is a kind of Heroic Poem. The fit *Odyssey* of our

unheroic age was to be written, not sung; of a Thinker, not of a Fighter; and (for want of a Homer) by the first open soul that might offer,—looked such even through the organs of a Boswell. We do the man's intellectual endowment great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome; though here too, there is not wanting a light ingenuity, a figurativeness and fanciful sport, with glimpses of insight far deeper than the common. But Boswell's grand intellectual talent was, as such ever is, an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach and significance than Logic; and showed itself in the whole, not in parts. Here again we have that old saying verified, 'The heart sees farther than the head.'

Thus does poor Bozzy stand out to us as an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. What, indeed, is man's life generally but a kind of beast-godhood; the god in us triumphing more and more over the beast; striving more and more to subdue it under his feet? Did not the Ancients, in their wise, perennially-significant way, figure Nature itself, their sacred ALL, or PAN, as a portentous commingling of these two discords; as musical, humane, oracular in its upper part, yet ending below in the cloven hairy feet of a goat? The union of melodious, celestial Free-will and Reason with foul Irrationality and Lust; in which, nevertheless, dwelt a mysterious unspeakable Fear and half-mad *panic* Awe; as for mortals there well might! And is not man a microcosm, or epitomised mirror of that same Universe; or rather, is not that Universe even Himself, the reflex of his own fearful and wonderful being, 'the waste fantasy of his own dream'? No wonder that man, that each man, and James Boswell like the others, should resemble it! The peculiarity in his case was the unusual defect of amalgamation and subordination: the highest lay side by

side with the lowest; not morally combined with it and spiritually transfiguring it, but tumbling in half-mechanical juxtaposition with it, and from time to time, as the mad alternation chanced, irradiating it, or eclipsed by it.

The world, as we said, has been but unjust to him; discerning only the outer terrestrial and often sordid mass; without eye, as it generally is, for his inner divine secret; and thus figuring him nowise as a god Pan, but simply of the bestial species, like the cattle on a thousand hills. Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him; as if it were in virtue even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work; as if it were the very fact of his being among the worst men in this world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falser hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing*; whatsoever enables us to *do* anything, is by its very nature *good*. Alas, that there should be teachers in Israel, or even learners, to whom this world-ancient fact is still problematical, or even deniable! Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his Love and childlike Open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthy in him, are so many blemishes in his Book, which still disturb us in its clearness; wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest, but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's: if such worship for real God-made superiors showed itself also as worship for apparent Tailor-made superiors, even as

hollow interested mouth-worship for such,—the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity! But for ourselves, let every one of us cling to this last article of Faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name: That neither James Boswell's good Book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof.

As for the Book itself, questionless the universal favour entertained for it is well merited. In worth as a Book we have rated it beyond any other product of the eighteenth century: all Johnson's own Writings, laborious and in their kind genuine above most, stand on a quite inferior level to it; already, indeed, they are becoming obsolete for this generation; and for some future generation may be valuable chiefly as Prolegomena and expository Scholia to this *Johnsoniad* of Boswell. Which of us but remembers, as one of the sunny spots in his existence, the day when he opened these airy volumes, fascinating him by a true natural magic! It was as if the curtains of the Past were drawn aside, and we looked mysteriously into a kindred country, where dwelt our Fathers; inexpressibly dear to us, but which had seemed forever hidden from our eyes. For the dead Night had engulfed it; all was gone, vanished as if it had not been. Nevertheless, wondrously given back to us, there once more it lay; all bright, lucid, blooming; a little island of Creation amid the circumambient Void. There it still lies; like a thing stationary, imperishable, over which changeful Time were now accumulating itself in vain, and could not, any longer, harm it, or hide it.

If we examine by what charm it is that men are still held to this *Life of Johnson*, now when so much else has been forgotten, the main part of the answer will perhaps be

found in that speculation 'on the import of *Reality*,' communicated to the world, last month, in this Magazine. The *Johnsoniad* of Boswell turns on objects that in very deed existed; it is all *true*. So far other in melodiousness of tone, it vies with the *Odyssey*, or surpasses it, in this one point: to us these read pages, as those chanted hexameters were to the first Greek hearers, are, in the fullest deepest sense, wholly *credible*. All the wit and wisdom lying embalmed in Boswell's Book, plenteous as these are, could not have saved it. Far more scientific *instruction* (mere excitement and enlightenment of the *thinking power*) can be found in twenty other works of that time, which make but a quite secondary impression on us. The other works of that time, however, fall under one of two classes: Either they are professedly Didactic; and, in that way, mere Abstractions, Philosophic Diagrams, incapable of interesting us much otherwise than as *Euclid's Elements* may do: Or else, with all their vivacity, and pictorial richness of colour, *they are Fictions and not Realities*. Deep truly, as Herr Sauerteig urges, is the force of this consideration: The thing here stated is a fact; those figures, that local habitation, are not shadow but substance. In virtue of such advantages, see how a very Boswell may become Poetical!

Critics insist much on the Poet that he should communicate an 'Infinitude' to his delineation; that by intensity of conception, by that gift of 'transcendental Thought,' which is fitly named *genius*, and inspiration, he should *inform* the Finite with a certain Infinitude of significance; or as they sometimes say, ennoble the Actual into Idealness. They are right in their precept; they mean rightly. But in cases like this of the *Johnsoniad*, such is the dark grandeur of that 'Time-element,' wherein man's soul here below lives imprisoned,—the Poet's task is, as it were, done to his

hand: Time itself, which is the outer veil of Eternity, invests, of its own accord, with an authentic, felt 'infinitude' whatsoever it has once embraced in its mysterious folds. Consider all that lies in that one word *Past!* What a pathetic, sacred, in every sense *poetic*, meaning is implied in it; a meaning growing ever the clearer, the farther we recede in Time,—the *more* of that same Past we have to look through!—On which ground indeed must Sauerteig have built, and not without plausibility, in that strange thesis of his: 'That History, after all, is the true Poetry; that Reality, if rightly interpreted, is grander than Fiction; nay that even in the right interpretation of Reality and History does genuine Poetry consist.'

Thus for *Boswell's Life of Johnson* has Time done, is Time still doing, what no ornament of Art or Artifice could have done for it. Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James *were*, and *are not*. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street: but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, pot-bellied Landlord; its rosy-faced assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves; her cooks, and bootjacks, and errand-boys, and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! Gone! The becking Waiter who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their supper of the gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence; and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all has vanished; in every deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the

Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there: of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying (were they of adamant), only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on: a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments; but the former Billow with *its* loud, mad eddyings, where is it?—Where!—Now this Book of Boswell's, this is precisely a revocation of the edict of Destiny; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamplit Pathway; shedding its feebler and feebler twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion,—for all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which miraculous little Pathway we can still travel, and see wonders.

It is not speaking with exaggeration, but with strict measured sobriety, to say that this Book of Boswell's will give us more real insight into the *History of England* during those days than twenty other Books, falsely entitled 'Histories,' which take to themselves that special aim. What good is it to me though innumerable Smolletts and Bels-hams keep dinning in my ears that a man named George the Third was born and bred up, and a man named George the Second died; that Walpole, and the Pelhams, and Chat-ham, and Rockingham, and Shelburne, and North, with their Coalition or their Separation Ministries, all ousted one another; and vehemently scrambled for 'the thing they called 'the Rudder of Government, but which was in reality the 'Spigot of Taxation'? That debates were held, and infi-

nite jarring and jargoning took place; and road-bills and enclosure-bills, and game-bills and India-bills, and Laws which no man can number, which happily few men needed to trouble their heads with beyond the passing moment, were enacted, and printed by the King's Stationer? That he who sat in Chancery, and rayed-out speculation from the Woolsack, was now a man that squinted, now a man that did not squint? To the hungry and thirsty mind all this avails next to nothing. These men and these things, we indeed know, did swim, by strength or by specific levity, as apples or as horse-dung, on the top of the current: but is it by painfully noting the courses, eddyings and bobbings hither and thither of such drift-articles, that you will unfold to me the nature of the current itself; of that mighty-rolling, loud-roaring Life-current, bottomless as the foundations of the Universe, mysterious as its Author? The thing I want to see is not Redbook Lists, and Court Calendars, and Parliamentary Registers, but the LIFE OF MAN in England: what men did, thought, suffered, enjoyed; the form, especially the spirit, of their terrestrial existence, its outward environment, its inward principle; *how* and *what* it was; whence it proceeded, whither it was tending.

Mournful, in truth, is it to behold what the business called 'History,' in these so enlightened and illuminated times, still continues to be. Can you gather from it, read till your eyes go out, any dimmest shadow of an answer to that great question: How men lived and had their being; were it but economically, as, what wages they got, and what they bought with these? Unhappily you cannot. History will throw no light on any such matter. At the point where living memory fails, it is all darkness; Mr. Senior and Mr. Sadler must still debate this simplest of all elements in the condition of the Past: Whether men were

better off, in their mere larders and pantries, or were worse off than now! History, as it stands all bound up in gilt volumes, is but a shade more instructive than the wooden volumes of a Backgammon-board. How my Prime Minister was appointed is of less moment to me than How my House Servant was hired. In these days, ten ordinary Histories of Kings and Courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good History of Booksellers.

For example, I would fain know the History of Scotland: who can tell it me? "Robertson," say innumerable voices; "Robertson against the world." I open Robertson; and find there, through long ages too confused for narrative, and fit only to be presented in the way of epitome and distilled essence, a cunning answer and hypothesis, not to this question: By whom, and by what means, when and how, was this fair broad Scotland, with its Arts and Manufactures, Temples, Schools, Institutions, Poetry, Spirit, National Character, created, and made arable, verdant, peculiar, great, here as I can see some fair section of it lying, kind and strong (like some Bacchus-tamed Lion), from the Castle-hill of Edinburgh?—but to this other question: How did the King keep himself alive in those old days; and restrain so many Butcher-Barons and ravenous Henchmen from utterly extirpating one another, so that killing went on in some sort of moderation? In the one little Letter of Æneas Sylvius, from old Scotland, there is more of History than in all this.—At length, however, we come to a luminous age, interesting enough; to the age of the Reformation. All Scotland is awakened to a second higher life: the Spirit of the Highest stirs in every bosom, agitates every bosom; Scotland is convulsed, fermenting, struggling to body itself forth anew. To the herdsman, among his cattle in remote woods; to the craftsman, in his rude, heath-thatched work-

shop, among his rude guild-brethren; to the great and to the little, a new light has arisen: in town and hamlet groups are gathered, with eloquent looks, and governed or ungovernable tongues; the great and the little go forth together to do battle for the Lord against the mighty. We ask, with breathless eagerness: How was it; how went it on? Let us understand it, let us see it, and know it!—In reply, is handed us a really graceful and most dainty little Scandalous Chronicle (as for some Journal of Fashion) of two persons: Mary Stuart, a Beauty, but over lightheaded; and Henry Darnley, a Booby who had fine legs. How these first courted, billed and cooed, according to nature; then pouted, fretted, grew utterly enraged, and blew one another up with gunpowder: this, and not the History of Scotland, is what we goodnaturedly read. Nay, by other hands, something like a horse-load of other Books have been written to prove that it was the Beauty who blew up the Booby, and that it was not she. Who or what it was, the thing once for all *being* so effectually done, concerns us little. To know Scotland, at that great epoch, were a valuable increase of knowledge: to know poor Darnley, and see him with burning candle, from centre to skin, were no increase of knowledge at all.—Thus is History written.

Hence, indeed, comes it that History, which should be ‘the essence of innumerable Biographies,’ will tell us, question it as we like, less than one genuine Biography may do, pleasantly and of its own accord! The time is approaching when History will be attempted on quite other principles; when the Court, the Senate and the Battlefield, receding more and more into the background, the Temple, the Workshop and Social Hearth will advance more and more into the foreground; and History will not content itself with shaping some answer to that question: How were men

taxed and *kept quiet* then? but will seek to answer this other infinitely wider and higher question: How and what *were men* then? Not our Government only, or the '*House* wherein our life was led,' but the *Life* itself we led there, will be inquired into. Of which latter it may be found that Government, in any modern sense of the word, is after all but a secondary condition: in the mere sense of *Taxation* and *Keeping quiet*, a small, almost a pitiful one.—Meanwhile let us welcome such Boswells, each in his degree, as bring us any genuine contribution, were it never so inadequate, so inconsiderable.

An exception was early taken against this *Life of Johnson*, and all similar enterprises, which we here recommend; and has been transmitted from critic to critic, and repeated in their several dialects, uninterruptedly, ever since: That such jottings-down of careless conversation are an infringement of social privacy; a crime against our highest Freedom, the Freedom of man's intercourse with man. To this accusation, which we have read and heard oftener than enough, might it not be well for once to offer the flattest contradiction, and plea of *Not at all guilty*? Not that conversation is noted down, but that conversation should not deserve noting down, is the evil. Doubtless, if conversation be falsely recorded, then is it simply a Lie; and worthy of being swept, with all despatch, to the Father of Lies. But if, on the other hand, conversation can be authentically recorded, and any one is ready for the task, let him by all means proceed with it; let conversation be kept in remembrance to the latest date possible. Nay, should the consciousness that a man may be among us 'taking notes' tend, in any measure, to restrict those floods of idle insincere *speech*, with which the *thought* of mankind is wellnigh drowned,—were it other than the most indubitable benefit? He who speaks honestly cares not, needs not care, though

his words be preserved to remotest time: for him who speaks *dishonestly*, the fittest of all punishments seems to be this same, which the nature of the case provides. The dishonest speaker, not he only who purposely utters falsehoods, but he who does not purposely, and with sincere heart, utter Truth, and Truth alone; who babbles he knows not what, and has clapped no bridle on his tongue, but lets it run racket, ejecting chatter and futility,—is among the most indisputable malefactors omitted, or inserted, in the Criminal Calendar. To him that will well consider it, idle speaking is precisely the beginning of all Hollowness, Halfness, *Infidelity* (want of Faithfulness); the genial atmosphere in which rank weeds of every kind attain the mastery over noble fruits in man's life, and utterly choke them out: one of the most crying maladies of these days, and to be testified against, and in all ways to the uttermost withstood. Wise, of a wisdom far beyond our shallow depth, was that old precept: *Watch thy tongue*; out of it are the issues of Life! 'Man is properly an *incarnated word*:' the *word* that he speaks is the *man* himself. Were eyes put into our head, that we might *see*; or only that we might fancy, and plausibly pretend, we had *seen*? Was the tongue suspended there, that it might tell truly what we had seen, and make man the soul's-brother of man; or only that it might utter vain sounds, jargon, soul-confusing, and so *divide* man, as by enchanted walls of Darkness, from union with man? Thou who wearest that cunning, heaven-made organ, a Tongue, think well of this. Speak not, I passionately entreat thee, till thy thought have silently matured itself, till thou have other than mad and mad-making noises to emit: *hold thy tongue* (thou hast it a-holding) till *some* meaning lie behind, to set it wagging. Consider the significance of SILENCE: it is boundless, never by meditating to be ex-

hausted; unspeakably profitable to thee! Cease that chaotic hubbub, wherein thy own soul runs to waste, to confused suicidal dislocation and stupor: out of Silence comes thy strength. 'Speech is silver, Silence is golden; Speech is human, Silence is divine.' Fool! thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there with ass-skin and blacklead to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is harmless? Nothing dies, nothing can die. No idlest word thou speakest but is a seed cast into Time, and grows through all Eternity! The Recording Angel, consider it well, is no fable, but the truest of truths: the paper tablets thou canst burn; of the 'iron leaf' there is no burning.—Truly, if we can permit God Almighty to note down our conversation, thinking it good enough for Him,—any poor Boswell need not scruple to work his will of it.

Leaving now this our English *Odyssey*, with its Singer and Scholiast, let us come to the *Ulysses*; that great Samuel Johnson himself, the far-experienced, 'much-enduring man,' whose labours and pilgrimage are here sung. A full-length image of his Existence has been preserved for us: and he, perhaps of all living Englishmen, was the one who best deserved that honour. For if it is true, and now almost proverbial, that 'the Life of the lowest mortal, if faithfully recorded, would be interesting to the highest;' how much more when the mortal in question was already distinguished in fortune and natural quality, so that his thinkings and doings were not significant of himself only, but of large masses of mankind! 'There is not a man whom I meet on 'the streets,' says one, 'but I could like, were it otherwise 'convenient, to know his Biography:' nevertheless, could an enlightened curiosity be so far gratified, it must be owned the Biography of most ought to be, in an extreme degree,

summary. In this world, there is so wonderfully little self-subsistence among men; next to no originality (though never absolutely *none*): one Life is too servilely the copy of another; and so in whole thousands of them you find little that is properly new; nothing but the old song sung by a new voice, with better or worse execution, here and there an ornamental quaver, and false notes enough: but the fundamental tune is ever the same; and for the *words*, these, all that they meant stands written generally on the Churchyard-stone: *Natus sum; esuriebam, quærebam; nunc repletus requiesco.* Mankind sail their Life-voyage in huge fleets, following some single whale-fishing or herring-fishing Commodore: the logbook of each differs not, in essential purport, from that of any other: nay the most have no legible logbook (reflection, observation not being among their talents); keep no reckoning, only *keep in sight* of the flagship,—and fish. Read the Commodore's Papers (know *his* Life); and even your lover of that street Biography will have learned the most of what he sought after.

Or, the servile *imitancy*, and yet also a nobler relationship and mysterious union to one another which lies in such imitancy, of Mankind might be illustrated under the different figure, itself nowise *original*, of a Flock of Sheep. Sheep go in flocks for three reasons: First, because they are of a gregarious temper, and *love* to be together: Secondly, because of their cowardice; they are afraid to be left alone: Thirdly, because the common run of them are dull of sight, to a proverb, and can have no choice in roads; sheep can in fact *see* nothing; in a celestial Luminary, and a scoured pewter Tankard, would discern only that both dazzled them, and were of unspeakable glory. How like their fellow-creatures of the human species! Men too, as was from the first maintained here, are gregarious; then surely faint-hearted

enough, trembling to be left by themselves; above all, dull-sighted, down to the verge of utter blindness. Thus are we seen ever running in torrents, and mobs, if we run at all; and after what foolish scoured Tankards, mistaking them for Suns! Foolish Turnip-lanterns likewise, to all appearance supernatural, keep whole nations quaking, their hair on end. Neither know we, except by blind habit, where the good pastures lie: solely when the sweet grass is between our teeth, we know it, and chew it; also when grass is bitter and scant, we know it,—and bleat and butt: these last two facts we know of a truth and in very deed. Thus do Men and Sheep play their parts on this Nether Earth; wandering restlessly in large masses, they know not whither; for most part, each following his neighbour, and his own nose.

Nevertheless, not always; .look better, you shall find certain that do, in some small degree, *know whither*. Sheep have their Bell-wether; some ram of the folds, endued with more valour, with clearer vision than other sheep; he leads them through the wolds, by height and hollow, to the woods and water-courses, for covert or for pleasant provender; courageously marching, and if need be leaping, and with hoof and horn doing battle, in the van: him they courageously and with assured heart follow. Touching it is, as every herdsman will inform you, with what chivalrous devotedness these woolly Hosts adhere to their Wether; and rush after him, through good report and through bad report, were it into safe shelters and green thymy nooks, or into asphaltic lakes and the jaws of devouring lions. Ever also must we recall that fact which we owe Jean Paul's quick eye: 'If you hold a stick before the Wether, so that he, by necessity, leaps in passing you, and then withdraw your stick, the Flock will nevertheless all leap as he did; and

‘ the thousandth sheep shall be found impetuously vaulting over air, as the first did over an otherwise impassable barrier.’ Reader, wouldst thou understand Society, ponder well those ovine proceedings; thou wilt find them all curiously significant.

Now if sheep always, how much more must men always, have their Chief, their Guide! Man too is by nature quite thoroughly *gregarious*: nay ever he struggles to be something more, to be *social*; not even when Society has become impossible, does that deep-seated tendency and effort forsake him. Man, as if by miraculous magic, imparts his Thoughts, his Mood of mind to man; an unspeakable communion binds all past, present and future men into one indissoluble whole, almost into one living individual. Of which high, mysterious Truth, this disposition to *imitate*, to lead and be led, this impossibility *not* to imitate, is the most constant, and one of the simplest manifestations. To imitate! which of us all can measure the significance that lies in that one word? By virtue of which the infant Man, born at Woolsthorpe, grows up not to be a hairy Savage and chewer of Acorns, but an Isaac Newton and Discoverer of Solar Systems!—Thus both in a celestial and terrestrial sense are we a *Flock*, such as there is no other: nay looking away from the base and ludicrous to the sublime and sacred side of the matter (since in every matter there are two sides), have not we also a SHEPHERD, ‘if we will but hear his voice’? Of those stupid multitudes there is no one but has an immortal Soul within him; a reflex and living image of God’s whole Universe: strangely, from its dim environment, the light of the Highest looks through him;—for which reason, indeed, it is that we claim a brotherhood with him, and so love to know his History, and come into clearer and clearer union with all that he feels, and says, and does.

However, the chief thing to be noted was this: Amid those dull millions, who, as a dull flock, roll hither and thither, whithersoever they are led; and seem all sightless and slayish, accomplishing, attempting little save what the animal instinct in its somewhat higher kind might teach, To keep themselves and their young ones alive,—are scattered here and there superior natures, whose eye is not destitute of free vision, nor their heart of free volition. These latter, therefore, examine and determine, not what others do, but what it is right to do; towards which, and which only, will they, with such force as is given them, resolutely endeavour: for if the Machine, living or inanimate, is merely *fed*, or desires to be fed, and so *works*; the Person can *will*, and so *do*. These are properly our Men, our Great Men; the guides of the dull host,—which follows them as by an irrevocable decree. They are the chosen of the world: they had this rare faculty not only of ‘supposing’ and ‘inclining to think,’ but of *knowing* and *believing*; the nature of their being was, that they lived not by Hearsay, but by clear Vision; while others hovered and swam along, in the grand Vanity-fair of the World, blinded by the mere Shows of things, these saw into the Things themselves, and could walk as men having an eternal loadstar, and with their feet on sure paths. Thus was there a *Reality* in their existence; something of a perennial character; in virtue of which indeed it is that the memory of them is perennial. Whoso belongs only to his own age, and reverences only *its* gilt Popinjays or soot-smear'd Mumbojumbos, must needs die with it: though he have been crowned seven times in the Capitol, or seventy-and-seven times, and Rumour have blown his praises to all the four winds, deafening every ear therewith,—it avails not; there was nothing universal, nothing eternal in him; he must fade away, even

as the Popinjay-gildings and Scarecrow-apparel, which he could not see through. The great man does, in good truth, belong to his own age; nay more so than any other man; being properly the synopsis and epitome of such age with its interests and influences: but belongs likewise to all ages, otherwise he is not great. What was transitory in him passes away; and an immortal part remains, the significance of which is in strict speech inexhaustible,—as that of every *real* object is. Aloft, conspicuous, on his enduring basis, he stands there, serene, unaltering; silently addresses to every new generation a new lesson and monition. Well is his Life worth writing, worth interpreting; and ever, in the new dialect of new times, of re-writing and re-interpreting.

Of such chosen men was Samuel Johnson: not ranking among the highest, or even the high, yet distinctly admitted into that sacred band; whose existence was no idle Dream, but a Reality which he transacted *awake*; nowise a Clothes-horse and Patent Digester, but a genuine Man. By nature he was gifted for the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priesthood, and Guidance of mankind; by destiny, moreover, he was appointed to this task, and did actually, according to strength, fulfil the same: so that always the question, *How; in what spirit; under what shape?* remains for us to be asked and answered concerning him. For as the highest Gospel was a Biography, so is the Life of every good man still an indubitable Gospel, and preaches to the eye and heart and whole man, so that Devils even must believe and tremble, these gladdest tidings: “Man is heaven-born; not the thrall of Circumstances, of Necessity, but the victorious subduer thereof: behold how he can become the ‘Announcer of himself and of his Freedom;’ and is ever what the Thinker has named him, ‘the Messiah of Nature.’” —Yes, Reader, all this that thou hast so often heard about

‘force of circumstances,’ ‘the creature of the time,’ ‘balancing of motives,’ and who knows what melancholy stuff to the like purport, wherein thou, as in a nightmare Dream, sittest paralysed, and hast no force left,—was in very truth, if Johnson and waking men are to be credited, little other than a hag-ridden vision of death-sleep; some *half*-fact, more fatal at times than a whole falsehood. Shake it off; awake; up and be doing, even as it is given thee!

The Contradiction which yawns wide enough in every Life, which it is the meaning and task of Life to reconcile, was in Johnson’s wider than in most. Seldom, for any man, has the contrast between the ethereal heavenward side of things, and the dark sordid earthward, been more glaring: whether we look at Nature’s work with him or Fortune’s, from first to last, heterogeneity, as of sunbeams and miry clay, is on all hands manifest. Whereby indeed, only this was declared, That *much Life* had been given him; many things to triumph over, a great work to *do*. Happily also he did it; better than the most.

Nature had given him a high, keen-visioned, almost poetic soul; yet withal imprisoned it in an inert, unsightly body: he that could never rest had not limbs that would move with him, but only roll and waddle: the inward eye, all-penetrating, all-embracing, must look through bodily windows that were dim, half-blinded; he so loved men, and ‘never once *saw* the human face divine’! Not less did he prize the love of men; he was eminently social; the approbation of his fellows was dear to him, ‘valuable,’ as he owned, ‘if from the meanest of human beings:’ yet the first impression he produced on every man was to be one of aversion, almost of disgust. By Nature it was farther ordered that the imperious Johnson should be born poor: the ruler-soul, strong in its native royalty, generous, uncontrollable,

like the lion of the woods, was to be housed, then, in such a dwelling-place: of Disfigurement, Disease, and lastly of a Poverty which itself made him the servant of servants. Thus was the born king likewise a born slave: the divine spirit of Music must awake imprisoned amid dull-croaking universal Discords; the Ariel finds himself encased in the coarse hulls of a Caliban. So is it more or less, we know (and thou, O Reader, knowest and feelest even now), with all men: yet with the fewest men in any such degree as with Johnson.

Fortune, moreover, which had so managed his first appearance in the world, lets not her hand lie idle, or turn the other way, but works unweariedly in the same spirit, while he is journeying through the world. What such a mind, stamped of Nature's noblest metal, though in so ungainly a die, was specially and best of all fitted for, might still be a question. To none of the world's few Incorporated Guilds could he have adjusted himself without difficulty, without distortion; in none been a Guild-Brother well at ease. Perhaps, if we look to the strictly practical nature of his faculty, to the strength, decision, method that manifests itself in him, we may say that his calling was rather towards Active than Speculative life; that as Statesman (in the higher, now obsolete sense), Lawgiver, Ruler, in short as Doer of the Work, he had shone even more than as Speaker of the Word. His honesty of heart, his courageous temper, the value he set on things outward and material, might have made him a King among Kings. Had the golden age of those new French Prophets, when it shall be *à chacun selon sa capacité, à chaque capacité selon ses œuvres*, but arrived! Indeed even in our brazen and Birmingham-lacquer age, he himself regretted that he had not become a Lawyer, and risen to be Chancellor, which he might well

have done. However, it was otherwise appointed. To no man does Fortune throw open all the kingdoms of this world, and say: It is thine; choose where thou wilt dwell! To the most she opens hardly the smallest cranny or doghutch, and says, not without asperity: There, that is thine while thou canst keep it; nestle thyself there, and bless Heaven! Alas, men must fit themselves into many things: some forty years ago, for instance, the noblest and ablest Man in all the British lands might be seen not swaying the royal sceptre, or the pontiff's censer, on the pinnacle of the World, but gauging ale-tubs in the little burgh of Dumfries! Johnson came a little nearer the mark than Burns: but with him too 'Strength was mournfully denied its arena;' he too had to fight Fortune at strange odds, all his life long.

Johnson's disposition for *royalty* (had the Fates so ordered it) is well seen in early boyhood. 'His favourites,' says Boswell, 'used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him; and thus was he borne triumphant.' The purfly, sand-blind lubber and blubber, with his open mouth, and face of bruised honeycomb; yet already dominant, imperial, irresistible! Not in the 'King's-chair' (of human arms), as we see, do his three satellites carry him along: rather on the *Tyrant's-saddle*, the back of his fellow-creature, must he ride prosperous!—The child is father of the man. He who had seen fifty years into coming Time, would have felt that little spectacle of mischievous schoolboys to be a great one. For us, who

look back on it, and what followed it, now from afar, there arise questions enough: How looked these urchins? What jackets and galligaskins had they; felt headgear, or of dog-skin leather? What was old Lichfield doing then; what thinking?—and so on, through the whole series of Corporal Trim's 'auxiliary verbs.' A picture of it all fashions itself together;—only unhappily we have no brush and no fingers.

Boyhood is now past; the ferula of Pedagogue waves harmless, in the distance: Samuel has struggled up to uncouth bulk and youthhood, wrestling with Disease and Poverty, all the way; which two continue still his companions. At College we see little of him; yet thus much, that things went not well. A rugged wildman of the desert, awakened to the feeling of himself; proud as the proudest, poor as the poorest; stoically shut up, silently enduring the incurable: what a world of blackest gloom, with sun-gleams and pale tearful moon-gleams, and flickerings of a celestial and an infernal splendour, was this that now opened for him! But the weather is wintry; and the toes of the man are looking through his shoes. His muddy features grow of a purple and sea-green colour; a flood of black indignation mantling beneath. A truculent, raw-boned figure! Meat he has probably little; hope he has less: his feet, as we said, have come into brotherhood with the cold mire.

'Shall I be particular,' inquires Sir John Hawkins, 'and relate a circumstance of his distress, that cannot be imputed to him as an effect of his own extravagance or irregularity, and consequently reflects no disgrace on his memory? He had scarce any change of raiment, and, in a short time after Corbet left him, but one pair of shoes, and those so old that his feet were seen through them: a gentleman of his college, the father of an eminent clergyman now living, directed a servitor one morning to place a new pair at the door of Johnson's chamber; who seeing them upon his first going out, so far forgot him-

self and the spirit which must have actuated his unknown benefactor, that, with all the indignation of an insulted man, he threw them away.'

How exceedingly surprising!—The Rev. Dr. Hall remarks: 'As far as we can judge from a cursory view of the weekly account in the buttery-books, Johnson appears to have lived as well as other commoners and scholars.' Alas! such 'cursory view of the buttery-books,' now from the safe distance of a century, in the safe chair of a College Mastership, is one thing; the continual view of the empty or locked buttery itself was quite a different thing. But hear our Knight, how he farther discourses. 'Johnson,' quoth Sir John, could 'not at this early period of his life divest himself of an idea that poverty was disgraceful; and was very severe in his censures of that economy in both our Universities, which exacted at meals the attendance of poor scholars, under the several denominations of Servitors in the one, and Siziers in the other: he thought that the scholar's, like the Christian life, levelled all distinctions of rank and worldly preëminence; but in this he was *mistaken*: civil polity' &c. &c.—Too true! It is man's lot to err.

However, Destiny, in all ways, means to prove the mistaken Samuel, and see what stuff is in him. He must leave these butteries of Oxford, Want like an armed man compelling him; retreat into his father's mean home; and there abandon himself for a season to inaction, disappointment, shame and nervous melancholy nigh run mad: he is probably the wretchedest man in wide England. In all ways he too must 'become perfect through *suffering*.'—High thoughts have visited him; his College Exercises have been praised beyond the walls of College; Pope himself has seen that *Translation*, and approved of it: Samuel had whispered to

himself: I too am 'one and somewhat.' False thoughts; that leave only misery behind! The fever-fire of Ambition is too painfully extinguished (but not cured) in the frost-bath of Poverty. Johnson has knocked at the gate, as one having a right; but there was no opening: the world lies all encircled as with brass; nowhere can he find or force the smallest entrance. An ushership at Market Bosworth, and 'a disagreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixie, the patron of the school,' yields him bread of affliction and water of affliction; but so bitter, that unassisted human nature cannot swallow them. Young Samson will grind no more in the Philistine mill of Bosworth; quits hold of Sir Wolstan, and the 'domestic chaplaincy, so far at least as to say grace at table,' and also to be 'treated with what he represented as intolerable harshness;' and so, after 'some months of such complicated misery,' feeling doubtless that there are worse things in the world than quick death by Famine, 'relinquishes a situation, which all his life afterwards he 'recollected with the strongest aversion, and even horror.' Men like Johnson are properly called the Forlorn Hope of the World: judge whether his hope was forlorn or not, by this Letter to a dull oily Printer who called himself *Sylvanus Urban*:

'Sir,—As you appear no less sensible than your readers of the defect of your poetical article, you will not be displeased if (in order to the improvement of it) I communicate to you the sentiments of a person who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

'His opinion is, that the public would' &c. &c.

'If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me in two posts, what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer (for a Prize Poem) gives me no reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects besides this paper, I have other designs to impart.'

Reader, the generous person, to whom this letter goes addressed, is 'Mr. Edmund Cave, at St. John's Gate, London;' the addressor of it is Samuel Johnson, in Birmingham, Warwickshire.

Nevertheless, Life rallies in the man; reasserts its right to be *lived*, even to be enjoyed. 'Better a small bush,' say the Scotch, 'than no shelter:' Johnson learns to be contented with humble human things; and is there not already an actual realised human Existence, all stirring and living on every hand of him? Go thou and do likewise! In Birmingham itself, with his own purchased goose-quill, he can earn 'five guineas;' nay, finally, the choicest terrestrial good: a Friend, who will be Wife to him! Johnson's marriage with the good Widow Porter has been treated with ridicule by many mortals, who apparently had no understanding thereof. That the purblind, seamy-faced Wildman, stalking lonely, woe-stricken, like some Irish Gallowglass with peeled club, whose speech no man knew, whose look all men both laughed at and shuddered at, should find any brave female heart to acknowledge, at first sight and hearing of him, "This is the most sensible man I ever met with;" and then, with generous courage, to take him to itself, and say, Be thou mine; be thou warmed here, and thawed to life!—in all this, in the kind Widow's love and pity for him, in Johnson's love and gratitude, there is actually no matter for ridicule. Their wedded life, as is the common lot, was made up of drizzle and dry weather; but innocence and worth dwelt in it; and when death had ended it, a certain sacredness: Johnson's deathless affection for his Tetty was always venerable and noble.

However, be all this as it might, Johnson is now minded to wed; and will live by the trade of Pedagogy, for by this also may life be kept in. Let the world therefore take notice:

‘*At Edial near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by—SAMUEL JOHNSON.*’ Had this Edial enterprise prospered, how different might the issue have been! Johnson had lived a life of unnoticed nobleness, or swoln into some amorphous Dr. Parr, of no avail to us; Bozzy would have dwindled into official insignificance, or risen by some other elevation; old Auchinleck had never been afflicted with “ane that keeped a schule,” or obliged to violate hospitality by a “Cromwell do? God, sir, he gart kings ken that there was a *lith* in their neck!”—But the Edial enterprise did not prosper; Destiny had other work appointed for Samuel Johnson; and young gentlemen got board where they could elsewhere find it. This man was to become a Teacher of grown gentlemen, in the most surprising way; a Man of Letters, and Ruler of the British Nation for some time,—not of their bodies merely but of their minds, not *over* them but *in* them.

The career of Literature could not, in Johnson’s day, any more than now, be said to lie along the shores of a Pactolus: whatever else might be gathered there, gold-dust was nowise the chief produce. The world, from the times of Socrates, St. Paul, and far earlier, has always had its Teachers; and always treated them in a peculiar way. A shrewd Townclerk (not of Ephesus), once, in founding a Burgh-Seminary, when the question came, How the Schoolmasters should be maintained? delivered this brief counsel: “D—n them, keep them *poor*!” Considerable wisdom may lie in this aphorism. At all events, we see, the world has acted on it long, and indeed improved on it,—putting many a Schoolmaster of its great Burgh-Seminary to a death which even *cost* it something. The world, it is true, had for some time been too busy to go out of its way, and *put* any Author

to death; however, the old sentence pronounced against them was found to be pretty sufficient. The first Writers, being Monks, were sworn to a vow of Poverty; the modern Authors had no need to swear to it. This was the epoch when an Otway could still die of hunger; not to speak of your innumerable Scrogginses, whom 'the Muse found stretched beneath a rug,' with 'rusty grate unconscious of a fire,' stocking-nightcap, sanded floor, and all the other escutcheons of the craft, time out of mind the heirlooms of Authorship. Scroggins, however, seems to have been but an idler; not at all so diligent as worthy Mr. Boyce, whom we might have seen *sitting up* in bed, with his wearing-apparel of Blanket about him, and a hole slit in the same, that his hand might be at liberty to work in its vocation. The worst was, that too frequently a blackguard recklessness of temper ensued, incapable of turning to account what good the gods even here had provided: your Boyces acted on some stoico-epicurean principle of *carpe diem*, as men do in bombarded towns, and seasons of raging pestilence;—and so had lost not only their life, and presence of mind, but their status as persons of respectability. The trade of Author was at about one of its lowest ebbs when Johnson embarked on it.

Accordingly we find no mention of Illuminations in the city of London, when this same Ruler of the British Nation arrived in it: no cannon-salvos are fired; no flourish of drums and trumpets greets his appearance on the scene. He enters quite quietly, with some copper halfpence in his pocket; creeps into lodgings in Exeter Street, Strand; and has a Coronation Pontiff also, of not less peculiar equipment, whom, with all submissiveness, he must wait upon, in his Vatican of St. John's Gate. This is the dull oily Printer alluded to above.

‘Cave’s temper,’ says our Knight Hawkins, ‘was phlegmatic: though he assumed, as the publisher of the Magazine, the name of Sylvanus Urban, he had few of those qualities that constitute urbanity. Judge of his want of them by this question, which he once put to an author: “Mr. —, I hear you have just published a pamphlet, and am told there is a very good paragraph in it upon the subject of music: did you write that yourself?” His discernment was also slow; and as he had already at his command some writers of prose and verse, who, in the language of Booksellers, are called good hands, he was the backwarder in making advances, or courting an intimacy with Johnson. Upon the first approach of a stranger, his practice was to continue sitting; a posture in which he was ever to be found, and for a few minutes to continue silent: if at any time he was inclined to begin the discourse, it was generally by putting a leaf of the Magazine, then in the press, into the hand of his visitor, and asking his opinion of it.

‘He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson’s abilities, that meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendour of some of those luminaries in Literature, who favoured him with their correspondence, he told him that if he would, in the evening, be at a certain alehouse in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or two of those illustrious contributors: Johnson accepted the invitation; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman’s coat, and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified.’³

In fact, if we look seriously into the condition of Authorship at that period, we shall find that Johnson had undertaken one of the ruggedest of all possible enterprises; that here as elsewhere Fortune had given him unspeakable Contradictions to reconcile. For a man of Johnson’s stamp, the Problem was twofold: *First*, not only as the humble but indispensable condition of all else, to keep himself, if so might be, *alive*; but *secondly*, to keep himself alive by speak-

³ Hawkins, pp. 46-50.

ing forth the *Truth* that was in him, and speaking it *truly*, that is, in the clearest and fittest utterance the Heavens had enabled him to give it, let the Earth say to this what she liked. Of which twofold Problem if it be hard to solve either member separately, how incalculably more so to solve it, when both are conjoined, and work with endless complication into one another! He that finds himself already *kept alive* can sometimes (unhappily not always) speak a little truth; he that finds himself able and willing, to all lengths, to *speak lies*, may, by watching how the wind sits, scrape together a livelihood, sometimes of great splendour: he, again, who finds himself provided with *neither* endowment, has but a ticklish game to play, and shall have praises if he win it. Let us look a little at both faces of the matter; and see what front they then offered our Adventurer, what front he offered them.

At the time of Johnson's appearance on the field, Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state; chiefly in this sense, as respects the pecuniary subsistence of its cultivators. It was in the very act of passing from the protection of Patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers. This happy change has been much sung and celebrated; many a 'lord of the lion heart and eagle eye' looking back with scorn enough on the bygone system of Dependency: so that now it were perhaps well to consider, for a moment, what good might also be in it, what gratitude we owe it. That a good was in it, admits not of doubt. Whatsoever has existed has had its value: without some truth and worth lying in it, the thing could not have hung together, and been the organ and sustenance, and method of action, for men that reasoned and were alive. Translate a Falsehood which is wholly

false into Practice, the result comes out *zero*; there is no fruit or issue to be derived from it. That in an age, when a Nobleman was still noble, still with his wealth the protector of worthy and humane things, and still venerated as such, a poor Man of Genius, his brother in nobleness, should, with unfeigned reverence, address him and say: "I have found Wisdom here, and would fain proclaim it abroad; wilt thou, of thy abundance, afford me the means?"—in all this there was no baseness; it was wholly an honest proposal, which a free man might make, and a free man listen to. So might a Tasso, with a *Gerusalemme* in his hand or in his head, speak to a Duke of Ferrara; so might a Shakspeare to his Southampton; and Continental Artists generally to their rich Protectors,—in some countries, down almost to these days. It was only when the reverence became *feigned*, that baseness entered into the transaction on both sides; and, indeed, flourished there with rapid luxuriance, till that became disgraceful for a Dryden, which a Shakspeare could once practise without offence.

Neither, it is very true, was the new way of Bookseller Mæcenasship worthless; which opened itself at this juncture, for the most important of all transport-trades, now when the old way had become too miry and impassable. Remark, moreover, how this second sort of Mæcenasship, after carrying us through nearly a century of Literary Time, appears now to have wellnigh discharged *its* function also; and to be working pretty rapidly towards some *third* method, the exact conditions of which are yet nowise visible. Thus all things have their end; and we should part with them all, not in anger, but in peace. The Bookseller-System, during its peculiar century, the whole of the eighteenth, did carry us handsomely along; and many good Works it has left us, and many good Men it maintained: if it is now expir-

ing by PUFFERY, as the Patronage-System did by FLATTERY (for *Lying* is ever the forerunner of Death, nay is itself Death), let us not forget its benefits; how it nursed Literature through boyhood and school-years, as Patronage had wrapped it in soft swaddling-bands;—till now we see it about to put on the *toga virilis*, could it but *find* any such!

There is tolerable travelling on the beaten road, run how it may; only on the new road not yet levelled and paved, and on the old road all broken into ruts and quagmires, is the travelling bad or impracticable. The difficulty lies always in the *transition* from one method to another. In which state it was that Johnson now found Literature; and out of which, let us also say, he manfully carried it. What remarkable mortal *first paid copyright* in England we have not ascertained; perhaps, for almost a century before, some scarce visible or ponderable pittance of wages had occasionally been yielded by the Seller of Books to the Writer of them: the original Covenant, stipulating to produce *Paradise Lost* on the one hand, and *Five Pounds Sterling* on the other, still lies (we have been told) in black-on-white, for inspection and purchase by the curious, at a Bookshop in Chancery Lane. Thus had the matter gone on, in a mixed confused way, for some threescore years;—as ever, in such things, the old system *overlaps* the new, by some generation or two, and only dies quite out when the new has got a complete organisation and weather-worthy surface of its own. Among the first Authors, the very first of any significance, who lived by the day's wages of his craft, and composedly faced the world on that basis, was Samuel Johnson.

At the time of Johnson's appearance there were still two ways, on which an Author might attempt proceeding: there were the Mæcenases proper in the West End of London;

and the Mæcenases virtual of St. John's Gate and Pater-noster Row. To a considerate man it might seem uncertain which method were preferable: neither had very high attractions; the Patron's aid was now wellnigh *necessarily* polluted by sycophancy, before it could come to hand; the Book-seller's was deformed with greedy stupidity, not to say entire wooden-headedness and disgust (so that an Osborne even required to be knocked down, by an author of spirit), and could barely keep the thread of life together. The one was the wages of suffering and poverty; the other, unless you gave strict heed to it, the wages of sin. In time, Johnson had opportunity of looking into both methods, and ascertaining what they were; but found, at first trial, that the former would in nowise do for him. Listen, once again, to that far-famed Blast of Doom, proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield, and, through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more!

'Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my Work⁴ through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance,⁵ one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour.

'The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

'Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased

⁴ The *English Dictionary*.

⁵ Were time and printer's space of no value, it were easy to wash away certain foolish soot-stains dropped here as 'Notes;' especially two: the one on this word, and on Boswell's Note to it; the other on the paragraph which follows. Let 'Ed.' look a second time; he will find that Johnson's sacred regard for *Truth* is the only thing to be 'noted,' in the former case; also, in the latter, that this of 'Love's being a native of the rocks' actually *has* a 'meaning.'

to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind : but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary and cannot impart it ; till I am known and do not want it. I hope, it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received ; or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

‘ Having carried on my Work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less : for I have long been awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

‘My Lord, your Lordship’s most humble, most obedient servant,
‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

And thus must the rebellious ‘Sam. Johnson’ turn him to the Bookselling guild, and the wondrous chaos of ‘Author by trade;’ and, though ushered into it only by that dull oily Printer, ‘with loose horseman’s coat and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore,’ and only as subaltern to some commanding-officer ‘Browne, sitting amid tobacco-smoke at the head of a long table in the alehouse at Clerkenwell,’—gird himself together for the warfare; having no alternative!

Little less contradictory was that other branch of the twofold Problem now set before Johnson: the speaking forth of *Truth*. Nay taken by itself, it had in those days become so complex as to puzzle strongest heads, with nothing else imposed on them for solution; and even to turn high heads of that sort into mere hollow *vizards*, speaking neither truth nor falsehood, nor anything but what the Prompter and Player (*ὑποκριτής*) put into them. Alas! for poor Johnson Contradiction abounded; in spirituals and in temporals, within and without. Born with the strongest unconquerable love of just Insight, he must begin to live and learn in a scene where Prejudice flourishes with rank

luxuriance. England was all confused enough, sightless and yet restless, take it where you would; but figure the best intellect in England nursed up to manhood in the idol-cavern of a poor Tradesman's house, in the cathedral city of Lichfield! What is Truth? said jesting Pilate. What is Truth? might earnest Johnson much more emphatically say. Truth, no longer, like the Phoenix, in rainbow plumage, poured, from her glittering beak, such tones of sweetest melody as took captive every ear: the Phoenix (waxing old) had wellnigh ceased her singing, and empty wearisome Cuckoos, and doleful monotonous Owls, innumerable Jays also, and twittering Sparrows on the housetop, pretended they were repeating her.

It was wholly a divided age, that of Johnson; Unity existed nowhere, in its Heaven, or in its Earth. Society, through every fibre, was rent asunder: all things, it was then becoming visible, but could not then be understood, were moving onwards, with an impulse received ages before, yet now first with a decisive rapidity, towards that great chaotic gulf, where, whether in the shape of French Revolutions, Reform Bills, or what shape soever, bloody or bloodless, the descent and engulfment assume, we now see them weltering and boiling. Already Cant, as once before hinted, had begun to play its wonderful part, for the hour was come: two ghastly Apparitions, unreal *simulacra* both, HYPOCRISY and ATHEISM are already, in silence, parting the world. Opinion and Action, which should live together as wedded pair, 'one flesh,' more properly as Soul and Body, have commenced their open quarrel, and are suing for a separate maintenance,—as if they could exist separately. To the earnest mind, in any position, firm footing and a life of Truth was becoming daily more difficult: in Johnson's position it was more difficult than in almost any other.

If, as for a devout nature was inevitable and indispensable, he looked up to Religion, as to the polestar of his voyage, already there was no *fixed* polestar any longer visible; but two stars, a whole constellation of stars, each proclaiming itself as the true. There was the red portentous comet-star of Infidelity; the dim fixed-star, burning ever dimmer, uncertain now whether not an atmospheric *meteor*, of Orthodoxy: which of these to choose? The keener intellects of Europe had, almost without exception, ranged themselves under the former: for some half century, it had been the general effort of European speculation to proclaim that Destruction of Falsehood was the only Truth; daily had Denial waxed stronger and stronger, Belief sunk more and more into decay. From our Bolingbrokes and Tolands the sceptical fever had passed into France, into Scotland; and already it smouldered, far and wide, secretly eating out the heart of England. Bayle had played his part; Voltaire, on a wider theatre, was playing his,—Johnson's senior by some fifteen years: Hume and Johnson were children almost of the same year.⁶ To this keener order of intellects did Johnson's indisputably belong: was he to join them; was he to oppose them? A complicated question: for, alas, the Church itself is no longer, even to him, wholly of true adamant, but of adamant and baked mud conjoined: the zealously Devout has to find his Church tottering; and pause amazed to see, instead of inspired Priest, many a swine-feeding Trulliber ministering at her altar. It is not the least curious of the incoherences which Johnson had to reconcile, that, though by nature contemptuous and incredulous, he was, at that time of day, to find his safety and glory in defending, with his whole might, the traditions of the elders.

⁶ Johnson, September 1709; Hume, April 1711.

Not less perplexingly intricate, and on both sides hollow or questionable, was the aspect of Politics. Whigs struggling blindly forward, Tories holding blindly back; each with some forecast of a half truth; neither with any forecast of the whole! Admire here this other Contradiction in the life of Johnson; that, though the most ungovernable, and in practice the most independent of men, he must be a Jacobite, and worshipper of the Divine Right. In Politics also there are Irreconcilables enough for him. As, indeed, how could it be otherwise? For when Religion is torn asunder, and the very heart of man's existence set against itself, then in all subordinate departments there must needs be hollowness, incoherence. The English Nation had rebelled against a Tyrant; and, by the hands of religious tyrannicides, exacted stern vengeance of him: Democracy had risen iron-sinewed, and, 'like an infant Hercules, strangled serpents in its cradle.' But as yet none knew the meaning or extent of the phenomenon: Europe was not ripe for it; not to be ripened for it but by the culture and various experience of another century and a half. And now, when the King-killers were all swept away, and a milder *second* picture was painted over the canvas of the *first*, and betitled 'Glorious Revolution,' who doubted but the catastrophe was over, the whole business finished, and Democracy gone to its long sleep? Yet was it like a business finished and not finished; a lingering uneasiness dwelt in all minds: the deep-lying, resistless Tendency, which had still to be *obeyed*, could no longer be *recognised*; thus was there halfness, insincerity, uncertainty in men's ways; instead of heroic Puritans and heroic Cavaliers, came now a dawdling set of argumentative Whigs, and a dawdling set of deaf-eared Tories; each half-foolish, each half-false. The Whigs were false and without basis; inasmuch as their whole object was Resistance, Criti-

cism, Demolition,—they knew not why, or towards what issue. In Whiggism, ever since a Charles and his Jeffries had ceased to meddle with it, and to have any Russel or Sydney to meddle with, there could be no divineness of character; not till, in these latter days, it took the figure of a thorough-going, all-defying Radicalism, was there any solid footing for it to stand on. Of the like uncertain, half-hollow nature had Toryism become, in Johnson's time; preaching forth indeed an everlasting truth, the duty of Loyalty; yet now, ever since the final expulsion of the Stuarts, having no *Person*, but only an *Office* to be loyal to; no living *Soul* to worship, but only a dead velvet-cushioned *Chair*. Its attitude, therefore, was stiff-necked refusal to move; as that of Whiggism was clamorous command to move,—let rhyme and reason, on both hands, say to it what they might. The consequence was: Immeasurable floods of contentious jargon, tending nowhither; false conviction; false resistance to conviction; decay (ultimately to become de cease) of whatsoever was once understood by the words, *Principle*, or *Honesty* of heart; the louder and louder triumph of *Halfness* and *Plausibility* over *Wholeness* and *Truth*;—at last, this all-overshadowing efflorescence of QUACKERY, which we now see, with all its deadening and killing fruits, in all its innumerable branches, down to the lowest. How, between these jarring extremes, wherein the rotten lay so inextricably intermingled with the sound, and as yet no eye could see through the ulterior meaning of the matter, was a faithful and true man to adjust himself?

That Johnson, in spite of all drawbacks, adopted the Conservative side; stationed himself as the unyielding opponent of Innovation, resolute to hold fast the form of sound words, could not but increase, in no small measure, the difficulties he had to strive with. We mean, the *moral* difficul-

ties; for in *economical* respects, it might be pretty equally balanced; the Tory servant of the Public had perhaps about the same chance of promotion as the Whig: and all the promotion Johnson aimed at was the privilege *to live*. But, for what, though unavowed, was no less indispensable, for his peace of conscience, and the clear ascertainment and feeling of his Duty as an inhabitant of God's world, the case was hereby rendered much more complex. To resist Innovation is easy enough on one condition: that you resist Inquiry. This is, and was, the common expedient of your common Conservatives; but it would not do for Johnson: he was a zealous recommender and practiser of Inquiry; once for all, could not and would not believe, much less speak and act, a Falsehood: the *form* of sound words, which he held fast, must have a *meaning* in it. Here lay the difficulty: to behold a portentous mixture of True and False, and feel that he must dwell and fight there; yet to love and defend only the True. How worship, when you cannot and will not be an idolater; yet cannot help discerning that the Symbol of your Divinity has half become idolatrous? This was the question, which Johnson, the man both of clear eye and devout believing heart, must answer,—at peril of his life. The Whig or Sceptic, on the other hand, had a much simpler part to play. To him only the idolatrous side of things, nowise the divine one, lay visible: not *worship*, therefore, nay in the strict sense not heart-honesty, only at most lip- and hand-honesty, is required of him. What spiritual force is his, he can conscientiously employ in the work of cavilling, of pulling-down what is False. For the rest, that there is or can be any Truth of a higher than sensual nature, has not occurred to him. The utmost, therefore, that he as man has to aim at, is RESPECTABILITY, the suffrages of his fellow-men. Such suffrages he may weigh as well as count:

or count only: according as he is a Burke or a Wilkes. But beyond these there lies nothing divine for him; these attained, all is attained. Thus is his whole world distinct and rounded-in; a clear goal is set before him; a firm path, rougher or smoother; at worst a firm region wherein to seek a path: let him gird-up his loins, and travel on without misgivings! For the honest Conservative, again, nothing is distinct, nothing rounded-in: RESPECTABILITY can nowise be his highest Godhead; not one aim, but two conflicting aims to be continually reconciled by him, has he to strive after. A difficult position, as we said; which accordingly the most did, even in those days, but half defend: by the surrender, namely, of their own too cumbersome *honesty*, or even *understanding*; after which the completest defence was worth little. Into this difficult position Johnson, nevertheless, threw himself: found it indeed full of difficulties; yet held it out manfully, as an honest-hearted, open-sighted man, while life was in him.

Such was that same 'twofold Problem' set before Samuel Johnson. Consider all these moral difficulties; and add to them the fearful aggravation, which lay in that other circumstance, that he needed a continual appeal to the Public, must continually produce a certain impression and conviction on the Public; that if he did not, he ceased to have 'provision for the day that was passing over him,' he could not any longer live! How a vulgar character, once launched into this wild element; driven onwards by Fear and Famine; without other aim than to clutch what Provender (of Enjoyment in any kind) he could get, always if possible keeping *quite* clear of the Gallows and Pillory, that is to say, minding heedfully both 'person' and 'character,'—would have floated hither and thither in it; and contrived to eat some three repasts daily, and wear some three suits yearly, and then to

depart and disappear, having consumed his last ration : all this might be worth knowing, but were in itself a trivial knowledge. How a noble man, resolute for the Truth, to whom Shams and Lies were once for all an abomination, was to act in it: *here* lay the mystery. By what methods, by what gifts of eye and hand, does a heroic Samuel Johnson, now when cast forth into that waste Chaos of Authorship, maddest of things, a mingled Phlegethon and Fleet-ditch, with its floating lumber, and sea-krakens, and mud-spectres, — shape himself a voyage; of the *transient* drift-wood, and the *enduring* iron, build him a sea-worthy Life-boat, and sail therein, undrowned, unpolluted, through the roaring ‘mother of dead dogs,’ onwards to an eternal Landmark, and City that hath foundations? This high question is even the one answered in Boswell’s Book; which Book we therefore, not so falsely, have named a *Heroic Poem*; for in it there lies the whole argument of such. Glory to our brave Samuel! He accomplished this wonderful Problem; and now through long generations we point to him, and say: Here also was a Man; let the world once more have assurance of a Man!

Had there been in Johnson, now when afloat on that confusion worse confounded of grandeur and squalor, no light but an earthly outward one, he too must have made shipwreck. With his diseased body, and vehement voracious heart, how easy for him to become a *carpe-diem* Philosopher, like the rest, and live and die as miserably as any Boyce of that Brotherhood! But happily there was a higher light for him; shining as a lamp to his path; which, in all paths, would teach him to act and walk not as a fool, but as wise, and in those evil days too ‘redeeming the time.’ Under dimmer or clearer manifestations, a Truth had been revealed to him: I also am a Man; even in this unutter-

able element of Authorship, I may live as beseems a Man! That Wrong is not only different from Right, but that it is in strict scientific terms *infinitely* different; even as the gaining of the whole world set against the losing of one's own soul, or (as Johnson had it) a Heaven set against a Hell; that in all situations out of the Pit of Tophet, wherein a living Man has stood or can stand, there is actually a Prize of quite *infinite* value placed within his reach, namely a *Duty* for him to do: this highest Gospel, which forms the basis and worth of all other Gospels whatsoever, had been revealed to Samuel Johnson; and the man had believed it, and laid it faithfully to heart. Such knowledge of the *transcendental*, immeasurable character of Duty we call the basis of all Gospels, the essence of all Religion: he who with his whole soul knows not this, as yet knows nothing, as yet *is* properly nothing.

This, happily for him, Johnson was one of those that knew: under a certain authentic Symbol it stood forever present to his eyes: a Symbol, indeed, waxing old as doth a garment; yet which had guided forward, as their Banner and celestial Pillar of Fire, innumerable saints and witnesses, the fathers of our modern world; and for him also had still a sacred significance. It does not appear that at any time Johnson was what we call irreligious: but in his sorrows and isolation, when hope died away, and only a long vista of suffering and toil lay before him to the end, then first did Religion shine forth in its meek, everlasting clearness; even as the stars do in black night, which in the daytime and dusk were hidden by inferior lights. How a true man, in the midst of errors and uncertainties, shall work out for himself a sure Life-truth; and adjusting the transient to the eternal, amid the fragments of ruined Temples build up, with toil and pain, a little Altar for himself, and

worship there ; how Samuel Johnson, in the era of Voltaire, can purify and fortify his soul, and hold real communion with the Highest, ‘in the Church of St. Clement Danes :’ this too stands all unfolded in his Biography, and is among the most touching and memorable things there ; a thing to be looked at with pity, admiration, awe. Johnson’s Religion was as the light of life to him ; without it his heart was all sick, dark and had no guidance left.

He is now enlisted, or impressed, into that unspeakable shoeblack-seraph Army of Authors ; but can feel hereby that he fights under a celestial flag, and will quit him like a man. The first grand requisite, an assured heart, he therefore has : what his outward equipments and accoutrements are, is the next question ; an important, though inferior one. His intellectual stock, intrinsically viewed, is perhaps inconsiderable : the furnishings of an English School and English University ; good knowledge of the Latin tongue, a more uncertain one of Greek : this is a rather slender stock of Education wherewith to front the world. But then it is to be remembered that his world was England ; that such was the culture England commonly supplied and expected. Besides, Johnson has been a voracious reader, though a desultory one, and oftenest in strange scholastic, too obsolete Libraries ; he has also rubbed shoulders with the press of Actual Life for some thirty years now : views or hallucinations of innumerable things are weltering to and fro in him. Above all, be his weapons what they may, he has an arm that can wield them. Nature has given him her choicest gift,—an open eye and heart. He will look on the world, wheresoever he can catch a glimpse of it, with eager curiosity : to the last, we find this a striking characteristic of him ; for all human interests he has a sense ; the meanest handicraftsman could interest him, even in extreme age, by

speaking of his craft: the ways of men are all interesting to him; any human thing, that he did not know, he wished to know. Reflection, moreover, Meditation, was what he practised incessantly, with or without his will: for the mind of the man was earnest, deep as well as humane. Thus would the world, such fragments of it as he could survey, form itself, or continually tend to form itself, into a coherent Whole; on any and on all phases of which, his vote and voice must be well worth listening to. As a Speaker of the Word, he will speak real words; no idle jargon or hollow triviality will issue from him. His aim too is clear, attainable; that of *working for his wages*: let him *do* this honestly, and all else will follow of its own accord.

With such omens, into such a warfare, did Johnson go forth. A rugged hungry Kerne or Gallowglass, as we called him: yet indomitable; in whom lay the true spirit of a Soldier. With giant's force he toils, since such is his appointment, were it but at hewing of wood and drawing of water for old sedentary bushy-wigged Cave; distinguishes himself by mere quantity, if there is to be no other distinction. He can write all things; frosty Latin verses, if these are the saleable commodity; Book-prefaces, Political Philippics, Review Articles, Parliamentary Debates: all things he does rapidly; still more surprising, all things he does thoroughly and well. How he sits there, in his rough-hewn, amorphous bulk, in that upper-room at St. John's Gate, and trundles-off sheet after sheet of those Senate-of-Lilliput Debates, to the clamorous Printer's Devils waiting for them with insatiable throat, down stairs; himself perhaps *impransus* all the while! Admire also the greatness of Literature; how a grain of mustard-seed cast into its Nile-waters, shall settle in the teeming mould, and be found, one day, as a Tree, in whose branches all the fowls of heaven may

lodge. Was it not so with these Lilliput Debates? In that small project and act began the stupendous FOURTH ESTATE; whose wide world-embracing influences what eye can take in; in whose boughs are there not already fowls of strange feather lodged? Such things, and far stranger, were done in that wondrous old Portal, even in latter times. And then figure Samuel dining 'behind the screen,' from a trencher covertly handed-in to him, at a preconcerted nod from the 'great bushy wig;' Samuel too ragged to show face, yet 'made a happy man of' by hearing his praise spoken. If to Johnson himself, then much more to us, may that St. John's Gate be a place we can 'never pass without veneration.'

Poverty, Distress, and as yet Obscurity, are his companions: so poor is he that his Wife must leave him, and seek shelter among other relations; Johnson's household has accommodation for one inmate only. To all his ever-varying, ever-recurring troubles, moreover, must be added this continual one of ill-health, and its concomitant depressiveness: a galling load, which would have crushed most common mortals into desperation, is his appointed ballast

⁷ All Johnson's places of resort and abode are venerable, and now indeed to the many as well as to the few; for his name has become great; and, as we must often with a kind of sad admiration recognise, there is, even to the rudest man, no greatness so venerable as intellectual, as spiritual greatness; nay properly there is no other venerable at all. For example, what soul-subduing magic, for the very clown or craftsman of our England, lies in the word 'Scholar'! "He is a Scholar:" he is a man *wiser* than we; of a wisdom to us *boundless*, infinite: who shall speak his worth! Such things, we say, fill us with a certain pathetic admiration of defaced and obstructed yet glorious man; archangel though in ruins,—or rather, though in *rubbish* of encumbrances and mud-incrustations, which also are not to be perpetual.

Nevertheless, in this mad-whirling all-forgetting London, the haunts of the mighty that were can seldom without a strange difficulty be discovered. Will any man, for instance, tell us which *bricks* it was in Lincoln's Inn Buildings that Ben Jonson's hand and trowel laid? No man, it is to be feared,—and also grumbled at. With Samuel Johnson may it prove otherwise! A Gentleman of the British Museum is said to have made drawings of all *his* residences: the blessing of Old Mortality be upon him! We ourselves, not without labour and risk, lately discovered GOUGH SQUARE, between Fleet Street and Holborn (adjoining both to BOLT

and life-burden; he 'could not remember the day he had passed free from pain.' Nevertheless, Life, as we said before, is always Life: a healthy soul, imprison it as you will, in squalid garrets, shabby coat, bodily sickness, or whatever else, will assert its heaven-granted indefeasible Freedom, its right to conquer difficulties, to do work, even to feel gladness. Johnson does not whine over his existence, but manfully makes the most and best of it. 'He said, a man 'might live in a garret at eighteenpence a-week: few people 'would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was 'easy to say, "Sir, I am to be found at such a place." By 'spending threepence in a coffee-house, he might be for 'some hours every day in very good company; he might 'dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread-and-milk for a penny, 'and do without supper. On *clean-shirt day* he went abroad 'and paid visits.' Think by whom and of whom this was uttered, and ask then, Whether there is more pathos in it than in a whole circulating-library of *Giaours* and *Harolds*, or less pathos? On another occasion, 'when Dr. Johnson, 'one day, read his own Satire, in which the life of a scholar 'is painted, with the various obstructions thrown in his 'way to fortune and to fame, he burst into a passion of

COURT and to JOHNSON'S COURT); and on the second day of search, the very House there, wherein the *English Dictionary* was composed. It is the first or corner house on the right hand, as you enter through the arched way from the North-west. The actual occupant, an elderly, well-washed, decent-looking man, invited us to enter; and courteously undertook to be *cicerone*; though in his memory lay nothing but the foolishhest jumble and hallucination. It is a stout old-fashioned, oak-balustraded house: "I have spent many a pound and penny on it since then," said the worthy Landlord: "here, you see, this Bedroom was the Doctor's study; that was the garden" (a plot of delved ground somewhat larger than a bed-quilt), "where he walked for exercise; these three garret Bedrooms" (where his three Copyists sat and wrote) "were the place he kept his—*Pupils* in"! *Tempus edax rerum!* Yet *ferax* also: for our friend now added, with a wistful look, which strove to seem merely historical: "I let it all in Lodgings, to respectable gentlemen; by the quarter or the month; it's all one to me."—"To me also," whispered the Ghost of Samuel, as we went pensively our ways.

'tears: Mr. Thrale's family and Mr. Scott only were present, who, in a jocose way, clapped him on the back, and said, "What's all this, my dear sir? Why, you and I and *Hercules*, you know, were all troubled with *melancholy*." He was a very large man, and made-out the triumvirate with Johnson and Hercules comically enough.' These were sweet tears; the sweet victorious remembrance lay in them of toils indeed frightful, yet never flinched from, and now triumphed over. 'One day it shall delight you also to remember labour done!'—Neither, though Johnson is obscure and poor, need the highest enjoyment of existence, that of heart freely communing with heart, be denied him. Savage and he wander homeless through the streets; without bed, yet not without friendly converse; such another conversation not, it is like, producible in the proudest drawing-room of London. Nor, under the void Night, upon the hard pavement, are their own woes the only topic: nowise; they "will stand by their country," they there, the two 'Backwoodsmen' of the Brick Desert!

Of all outward evils Obscurity is perhaps in itself the least. To Johnson, as to a healthy-minded man, the fantastic article, sold or given under the title of *Fame*, had little or no value but its intrinsic one. He prized it as the means of getting him employment and good wages; scarcely as anything more. His light and guidance came from a loftier source; of which, in honest aversion to all hypocrisy or pretentious talk, he spoke not to men; nay perhaps, being of a *healthy* mind, had never spoken to himself. We reckon it a striking fact in Johnson's history, this carelessness of his to Fame. Most authors speak of their 'Fame' as if it were a quite priceless matter; the grand ultimatum, and heavenly Constantine's-Banner they had to follow, and conquer under.—Thy 'Fame'! Unhappy mortal, where will it and thou

both be in some fifty years? Shakspeare himself has lasted but two hundred; Homer (partly by accident) three thousand: and does not already an ETERNITY encircle every *Me* and every *Thee*? Cease, then, to sit feverishly hatching on that 'Fame' of thine; and flapping and shrieking with fierce hisses, like brood-goose on her last egg, if man shall or dare approach it! Quarrel not with me, hate me not, my Brother: make what thou canst of thy egg, and welcome: God knows, I will not steal it; I believe it to be *addle*.—Johnson, for his part, was no man to be killed by a review; concerning which matter, it was said by a benevolent person: If any author *can* be reviewed to death, let it be, with all convenient despatch, *done*. Johnson thankfully receives any word spoken in his favour; is nowise disobliged by a lampoon, but will look at it, if pointed out to him, and show how it might have been done better: the lampoon itself is indeed *nothing*, a soap-bubble that next moment will become a drop of sour suds; but in the mean while, if it do anything, it keeps him more in the world's eye, and the next *bargain* will be all the richer: "Sir, if they should cease to talk of me, I must starve." Sound heart and understanding head: these fail no man, not even a Man of Letters!

Obscurity, however, was, in Johnson's case, whether a light or heavy evil, likely to be no lasting one. He is animated by the spirit of a true *workman*, resolute to do his work well; and he *does* his work well; all his work, that of writing, that of living. A man of this stamp is unhappily not so common in the literary or in any other department of the world, that he can continue always unnoticed. By slow degrees, Johnson emerges; looming, at first, huge and dim in the eye of an observant few; at last disclosed, in his real proportions, to the eye of the whole world, and encircled with a 'light-nimbus' of glory, so that whoso is not blind

must and shall behold him. By slow degrees, we said; for this also is notable; slow but sure: as his fame waxes not by exaggerated clamour of what he *seems* to be, but by better and better insight of what he *is*, so it will last and stand wearing, being genuine. Thus indeed is it always, or nearly always, with true fame. The heavenly Luminary rises amid vapours; stargazers enough must scan it with critical telescopes; it makes no blazing, the world can either look at it, or forbear looking at it; not till after a time and times does its celestial eternal nature become indubitable. Pleasant, on the other hand, is the blazing of a Tarbarrel; the crowd dance merrily round it, with loud huzzaing, universal three-times-three, and, like Homer's peasants, 'bless the useful light:' but unhappily it so soon ends in darkness, foul choking smoke; and is kicked into the gutters, a nameless imbroglio of charred staves, pitch-cinders and *vomissement du diable*!

But indeed, from of old, Johnson has enjoyed all, or nearly all, that Fame can yield any man: the respect, the obedience of those that are about him and inferior to him; of those whose opinion alone can have any forcible impression on him. A little circle gathers round the Wise man; which gradually enlarges as the report thereof spreads, and more can come to see and to believe; for Wisdom is precious, and of irresistible attraction to all. 'An inspired-idiot,' Goldsmith, hangs strangely about him; though, as Hawkins says, 'he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for his parts; and once entreated a friend to desist from praising him, "for in doing so," said he, "you harrow-up my very soul!"' Yet, on the whole, there is no evil in the 'gooseberry-fool;' but rather much good; of a finer, if of a weaker, sort than Johnson's; and all the more genuine that he himself could never become *conscious* of it,—though unhappily never cease *attempting* to become so: the Author of the genuine *Vicar*

of Wakefield, nill he, will he, must needs fly towards such a mass of genuine Manhood; and Dr. Minor keep gyrating round Dr. Major, alternately attracted and repelled. Then there is the chivalrous Topham Beauclerk, with his sharp wit, and gallant courtly ways: there is Bennet Langton, an orthodox gentleman, and worthy; though Johnson once laughed, louder almost than mortal, at his last will and testament; and 'could not stop his merriment, but continued it ' all the way till he got without the Temple-gate; then burst ' into such a fit of laughter that he appeared to be almost in ' a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold ' of one of the posts at the side of the foot-pavement, and ' sent forth peals so loud that, in the silence of the night, his ' voice seemed to resound from Temple-bar to Fleet-ditch!' Lastly comes his solid-thinking, solid-feeding Thrale, the well-beloved man; with *Thralia*, a bright papilionaceous creature, whom the elephant loved to play with, and wave to and fro upon his trunk. Not to speak of a reverent Bozzy, for what need is there farther?—Or of the spiritual Luminaries, with tongue or pen, who made that age remarkable; or of Highland Lairds drinking, in fierce usquebaugh, "Your health, Tector Shonson!"—Still less of many such as that poor 'Mr. F. Lewis,' older in date, of whose birth, death and whole terrestrial *res gestæ*, this only, and strange enough this actually, survives: "Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society!" *Stat PARVI nominis umbra.*—

In his fifty-third year he is beneficed, by the royal bounty, with a Pension of three-hundred pounds. Loud clamour is always more or less insane: but probably the insanest of all loud clamours in the eighteenth century was this that was raised about Johnson's Pension. Men seem to be led by the noses: but in reality, it is by the ears,—as some ancient slaves were, who had their ears bored; or as some modern

quadrupeds may be, whose ears are long. Very falsely was it said, 'Names do not change Things.' Names do change Things; nay for most part they are the only substance, which mankind can discern in Things. The whole sum that Johnson, during the remaining twenty-two years of his life, drew from the public funds of England, would have supported some Supreme Priest for about half as many weeks; it amounts very nearly to the revenue of our poorest Church-Overseer for one twelvemonth. Of secular Administrators of Provinces, and Horse-subduers, and Game-destroyers, we shall not so much as speak: but who were the Primates of England, and the Primates of All England, during Johnson's days? No man has remembered. Again, is the Primate of all England something, or is he nothing? If something, then what but the man who, in the supreme degree, teaches and spiritually edifies, and leads towards Heaven by guiding wisely through the Earth, the living souls that inhabit England? We touch here upon deep matters; which but remotely concern us, and might lead us into still deeper: clear, in the mean while, it is that the true Spiritual Edifier and Soul's-Father of all England was, and till very lately continued to be, the man named Samuel Johnson,—whom this scot-and-lot-paying world cackled reproachfully to see remunerated like a Supervisor of Excise!

If Destiny had beaten hard on poor Samuel, and did never cease to visit him too roughly, yet the last section of his Life might be pronounced victorious, and on the whole happy. He was not idle; but now no longer goaded-on by want; the light which had shone irradiating the dark haunts of Poverty, now illuminates the circles of Wealth, of a certain culture and elegant intelligence; he who had once been admitted to speak with Edmund Cave and Tobacco Browne, now admits a Reynolds and a Burke to speak

with him. Loving friends are there; Listeners, even Answerers: the fruit of his long labours lies round him in fair legible Writings, of Philosophy, Eloquence, Morality, Philology; some excellent, all worthy and genuine Works; for which too, a deep, earnest murmur of thanks reaches him from all ends of his Fatherland. Nay there are works of Goodness, of undying Mercy, which even he has possessed the power to do: 'What I gave I have; what I spent I had!' Early friends had long sunk into the grave; yet in his soul they ever lived, fresh and clear, with soft pious breathings towards them, not without a still hope of one day meeting them again in purer union. Such was Johnson's Life: the victorious Battle of a free, true Man. Finally he died the death of the free and true: a dark cloud of Death, solemn and not untinged with haloes of immortal Hope, 'took him away,' and our eyes could no longer behold him; but can still behold the trace and impress of his courageous honest spirit, deep-legible in the World's Business, wheresoever he walked and was.

To estimate the quantity of Work that Johnson performed, how much poorer the World were had it wanted him, can, as in all such cases, never be accurately done; cannot, till after some longer space, be approximately done. All work is as seed sown; it grows and spreads, and sows itself anew, and so, in endless palingenesia, lives and works. To Johnson's Writings, good and solid, and still profitable as they are, we have already rated his Life and Conversation as superior. By the one and by the other, who shall compute what effects have been produced, and are still, and into deep Time, producing?

So much, however, we can already see: It is now some three quarters of a century that Johnson has been the Pro-

phet of the English; the man by whose light the English people, in public and in private, more than by any other man's, have guided their existence. Higher light than that immediately *practical* one; higher virtue than an honest PRUDENCE, he could not then communicate; nor perhaps could they have received: such light, such virtue, however, he did communicate. How to thread this labyrinthic Time, the fallen and falling Ruin of Times; to silence vain Scruples, hold firm to the last the fragments of old Belief, and with earnest eye still discern some glimpses of a true path, and go forward thereon, 'in a world where there is much to be done, and little to be known:' this is what Samuel Johnson, by act and word, taught his Nation; what his Nation received and learned of him, more than of any other. We can view him as the preserver and transmitter of whatsoever was genuine in the spirit of Toryism; which genuine spirit, it is now becoming manifest, must again embody itself in all new forms of Society, be what they may, that are to exist, and have continuance—elsewhere than on Paper. The *last* in many things, Johnson was the last genuine Tory; the last of Englishmen who, with strong voice and wholly-believing heart, preached the Doctrine of Standing-still; who, without selfishness or slavishness, revered the existing Powers, and could assert the privileges of rank, though himself poor, neglected and plebeian; who had heart-devoutness with heart-hatred of cant, was orthodox-religious with his eyes open; and in all things and everywhere spoke out in plain English, from a soul wherein jesuitism could find no harbour, and with the front and tone not of a diplomatist but of a man.

This last of the Tories was Johnson: not Burke, as is often said; Burke was essentially a Whig, and only, on reaching the verge of the chasm towards which Whiggism

from the first was inevitably leading, recoiled; and, like a man vehement rather than earnest, a resplendent far-sighted Rhetorician rather than a deep sure Thinker, recoiled with no measure, convulsively, and damaging what he drove back with him.

In a world which exists by the balance of Antagonisms, the respective merit of the Conservator and the Innovator must ever remain debatable. Great, in the mean while, and undoubted for both sides, is the merit of him who, in a day of Change, walks wisely, honestly. Johnson's aim was in itself an impossible one: this of stemming the eternal Flood of Time; of clutching all things, and anchoring them down, and saying, Move not!—how could it, or should it, ever have success? The strongest man can but retard the current partially and for a short hour. Yet even in such shortest retardation may not an inestimable value lie? If England has escaped the blood-bath of a French Revolution; and may yet, in virtue of this delay and of the experience it has given, work out her deliverance calmly into a new Era, let Samuel Johnson, beyond all contemporary or succeeding men, have the praise for it. We said above that he was appointed to be Ruler of the British Nation for a season: whoso will look beyond the surface, into the heart of the world's movements, may find that all Pitt Administrations, and Continental Subsidies, and Waterloo victories, rested on the possibility of making England, yet a little while, *Toryish*, Loyal to the Old; and this again on the anterior reality, that the Wise had found such Loyalty still practicable, and recommendable. England had its Hume, as France had its Voltaires and Diderots; but the Johnson was peculiar to us.

If we ask now, by what endowment it mainly was that Johnson realised such a Life for himself and others; what quality of character the main phenomena of his Life may be

most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to, in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were: The quality of Courage, of Valour; that Johnson was a Brave Man. The Courage that can go forth, once and away, to Chalk-Farm, and have itself shot, and snuffed out, with decency, is nowise wholly what we mean here. Such courage we indeed esteem an exceeding small matter; capable of coexisting with a life full of falsehood, feebleness, poltroonery and despicability. Nay oftener it is Cowardice rather that produces the result: for consider, Is the Chalk-Farm Pistoleer inspired with any reasonable Belief and Determination; or is he hounded-on by haggard indefinable Fear,—how he will be *cut* at public places, and ‘plucked geese of the neighbourhood’ will wag their tongues at him a plucked goose? If he go then, and be shot without shrieking or audible uproar, it is well for him: nevertheless there is nothing amazing in it. Courage to manage all this has not perhaps been denied to any man, or to any woman. Thus, do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged losels enough; every one of whom, if once dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling *per diem*, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety? The Courage that dares only *die* is on the whole no sublime affair; necessary indeed, yet universal; pitiful when it begins to parade itself. On this Globe of ours there are some thirty-six persons that manifest it, seldom with the smallest failure, during every second of time. Nay look at Newgate: do not the offscourings of Creation, when condemned to the gallows as if they were not men but vermin, walk thither with decency, and even to the scowls and hootings of the whole Universe give their stern good-night in silence? What is to be undergone only

once, we may undergo; what must be, comes almost of its own accord. Considered as Duellist, what a poor figure does the fiercest Irish Whiskerando make in comparison with any English Game-cock, such as you may buy for fifteenpence!

The Courage we desire and prize is not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully. This, when by God's grace it has been given, lies deep in the soul; like genial heat, fosters all other virtues and gifts; without it they could not live. In spite of our innumerable Waterloos and Peterloos, and such campaigning as there has been, this Courage we allude to, and call the only true one, is perhaps rarer in these last ages than it has been in any other since the Saxon Invasion under Hengist. Altogether extinct it can never be among men; otherwise the species Man were no longer for this world: here and there, in all times, under various guises, men are sent hither not only to demonstrate but exhibit it, and testify, as from heart to heart, that it is still possible, still practicable.

Johnson, in the eighteenth century, and as Man of Letters, was one of such; and, in good truth, 'the bravest of the brave.' What mortal could have more to war with? Yet, as we saw, he yielded not, faltered not; he fought, and even, such was his blessedness, prevailed. Whoso will understand what it is to have a man's heart may find that, since the time of John Milton, no braver heart had beat in any English bosom than Samuel Johnson now bore. Observe too that he never called himself brave, never felt himself to be so; the more completely *was* so. No Giant Despair, no Golgotha Death-dance or Sorcerer's-Sabbath of 'Literary Life in London,' appals this pilgrim; he works resolutely for deliverance; in still defiance steps stoutly along. The thing that is given him to do, he can make himself do; what is to be endured, he can endure in silence.

How the great soul of old Samuel, consuming daily his own bitter unalleviable allotment of misery and toil, shows beside the poor flimsy little soul of young Boswell; one day flaunting in the ring of vanity, tarrying by the wine-cup and crying, Aha, the wine is red; the next day deploring his downpressed, night-shaded, quite poor estate, and thinking it unkind that the whole movement of the Universe should go on, while *his* digestive-apparatus had stopped! We reckon Johnson's 'talent of silence' to be among his great and too rare gifts. Where there is nothing farther to be done, there shall nothing farther be said: like his own poor blind Welshwoman, he accomplished somewhat, and also 'endured fifty years of wretchedness with unshaken fortitude.' How grim was Life to him; a sick Prison-house and Doubting-castle! 'His great business,' he would profess, 'was to escape from himself.' Yet towards all this he has taken his position and resolution; can dismiss it all 'with frigid indifference, having little to hope or to fear.' Friends are stupid, and pusillanimous, and parsimonious; 'wearied of his stay, yet offended at his departure:' it is the manner of the world. 'By popular delusion,' remarks he with a gigantic calmness, 'illiterate writers will rise into renown:' it is portion of the History of English Literature; a perennial thing, this same popular delusion; and will—alter the character of the Language.

Closely connected with this quality of Valour, partly as springing from it, partly as protected by it, are the more recognisable qualities of Truthfulness in word and thought, and Honesty in action. There is a reciprocity of influence here: for as the realising of Truthfulness and Honesty is the life-light and great aim of Valour, so without Valour they cannot, in anywise, be realised. Now, in spite of all practical shortcomings, no one that sees into the significance

of Johnson will say that his prime object was not Truth. In conversation, doubtless, you may observe him, on occasion, fighting as if for victory;—and must pardon these ebulliences of a careless hour, which were not without temptation and provocation. Remark likewise two things: that such prize-arguings were ever on merely superficial debatable questions; and then that they were argued generally by the fair laws of battle and logic-fence, by one cunning in that same. If their purpose was excusable, their effect was harmless, perhaps beneficial: that of taming noisy mediocrity, and showing it another side of a debatable matter; to see *both* sides of which was, for the first time, to see the Truth of it. In his Writings themselves are errors enough, crabbed prepossessions enough; yet these also of a quite extraneous and accidental nature, nowhere a wilful shutting of the eyes to the Truth. Nay, is there not everywhere a heartfelt discernment, singular, almost admirable, if we consider through what confused conflicting lights and hallucinations it had to be attained, of the highest everlasting Truth, and beginning of all Truths: this namely, that man is ever, and even in the age of Wilkes and Whitefield, a Revelation of God to man; and lives, moves and has his being in Truth only; is either true, or, in strict speech, *is not at all?*

Quite spotless, on the other hand, is Johnson's love of Truth, if we look at it as expressed in Practice, as what we have named Honesty of action. 'Clear your mind of Cant;' *clear* it, throw Cant utterly away: such was his emphatic, repeated precept; and did not he himself faithfully conform to it? The Life of this man has been, as it were, turned inside out, and examined with microscopes by friend and foe; yet was there no Lie found in him. His Doings and Writings are not *shows* but *performances*: you may weigh them in the balance, and they will stand weight. Not a

line, not a sentence is dishonestly done, is other than it pretends to be. Alas! and he wrote not out of inward inspiration, but to earn his wages: and with that grand perennial tide of 'popular delusion' flowing by; in whose waters he nevertheless refused to fish, to whose rich oyster-beds the dive was too muddy for him. Observe, again, with what innate hatred of Cant, he takes for himself, and offers to others, the lowest possible view of his business, which he followed with such nobleness. Motive for writing he had none, as he often said, but money; and yet he wrote *so*. Into the region of Poetic Art he indeed never rose; there was no *ideal* without him avowing itself in his work: the nobler was that unavowed *ideal* which lay within him, and commanded saying, Work out thy Artisan-ship in the spirit of an Artist! They who talk loudest about the dignity of Art, and fancy that they too are Artistic guild-brethren, and of the Celestials,—let them consider well what manner of man this was, who felt himself to be only a hired day-labourer. A labourer that was worthy of his hire; that has laboured not as an eye-servant, but as one found faithful! Neither was Johnson in those days perhaps wholly a unique. Time was when, for money, you might have ware: and needed not, in all departments, in that of the Epic Poem, in that of the Blacking-bottle, to rest content with the mere *persuasion* that you had ware. It was a happier time. But as yet the seventh Apocalyptic Bladder (of PUFFERY) had not been rent open,—to whirl and grind, as in a West-Indian Tornado, all earthly trades and things into wreck, and dust, and consummation,—and regeneration. Be it quickly, since it must be!—

That Mercy can dwell only with Valour, is an old sentiment or proposition; which in Johnson again receives confirmation. Few men on record have had a more merciful,

tenderly affectionate nature than old Samuel. He was called the Bear; and did indeed too often look, and roar, like one; being forced to it in his own defence: yet within that shaggy exterior of his there beat a heart warm as a mother's soft as a little child's. Nay generally, his very roaring was but the anger of affection: the rage of a Bear, if you will; but of a Bear bereaved of her whelps. Touch his Religion, glance at the Church of England, or the Divine Right; and he was upon you! These things were his Symbols of all that was good and precious for men; his very Ark of the Covenant: whoso laid hand on them tore asunder his heart of hearts. Not out of hatred to the opponent, but of love to the thing opposed, did Johnson grow cruel, fiercely contradictory: this is an important distinction; never to be forgotten in our censure of his conversational outrages. But observe also with what humanity, what openness of love, he can attach himself to all things: to a blind old woman, to a Doctor Levett, to a cat 'Hodge.' 'His thoughts in the 'latter part of his life were frequently employed on his 'deceased friends; he often muttered these or suchlike 'sentences: "Poor man! and then he died."' How he patiently converts his poor home into a Lazaretto; endures, for long years, the contradiction of the miserable and unreasonable; with him unconnected, save that they had no other to yield them refuge! Generous old man! Worldly possession he has little; yet of this he gives freely; from his own hard-earned shilling, the half-pence for the poor, that 'waited his coming out,' are not withheld: the poor 'waited the coming out' of one not quite so poor! A Sterne can write sentimentalities on Dead Asses: Johnson has a rough voice; but he finds the wretched Daughter of Vice fallen down in the streets; carries her home on his own shoulders, and like a good Samaritan gives help to the help-

needing, worthy or unworthy. Ought not Charity, even in that sense, to cover a multitude of sins? No Penny-a-week Committee-Lady, no manager of Soup-Kitchens, dancer at Charity-Balls, was this rugged, stern-visaged man: but where, in all England, could there have been found another soul so full of Pity, a hand so heavenlike bounteous as his? The widow's mite, we know, was greater than all the other gifts.

Perhaps it is this divine feeling of Affection, throughout manifested, that principally attracts us towards Johnson. A true brother of men is he; and filial lover of the Earth; who, with little bright spots of Attachment, 'where lives 'and works some loved one,' has beautified 'this rough solitary Earth into a peopled garden.' Lichfield, with its mostly dull and limited inhabitants, is to the last one of the sunny islets for him: *Salve magna parens!* Or read those Letters on his Mother's death: what a genuine solemn grief and pity lies recorded there; a looking back into the Past, unspeakably mournful, unspeakably tender. And yet calm, sublime; for he must now act, not look: his venerated Mother has been taken from him; but he must now write a *Rasselas* to defray her funeral! Again in this little incident, recorded in his Book of Devotion, are not the tones of sacred Sorrow and Greatness deeper than in many a blank-verse Tragedy;—as, indeed, 'the fifth act of a Tragedy,' though unrhymed, does 'lie in every death-bed, were it a peasant's, and of straw:'

'Sunday, October 18, 1767. Yesterday, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave forever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

'I desired all to withdraw; then told her that we were to part

forever ; that as Christians, we should part with prayer ; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me ; and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed kneeling by her. * * *

‘I then kissed her. She told me that to part was the greatest pain she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed and parted ; I humbly hope, to meet again, and to part no more.’

Tears trickling down the granite rock: a soft well of Pity springs within!—Still more tragical is this other scene: ‘Johnson mentioned that he could not in general accuse ‘himself of having been an undutiful son. “Once, indeed,” ‘said he, “I was disobedient: I refused to attend my father ‘to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, ‘and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago ‘I desired to atone for this fault.”’—But by what method?—What method was now possible? Hear it; the words are again given as his own, though here evidently by a less capable reporter:

‘Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure in the morning, but I was compelled to it by conscience. Fifty years ago, Madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety. My father had been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter market, and opening a stall there for the sale of his Books. Confined by indisposition, he desired me, that day, to go and attend the stall in his place. My pride prevented me ; I gave my father a refusal.—And now today I have been at Uttoxeter ; I went into the market at the time of business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare, for an hour, on the spot where my father’s stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory.’

Who does not figure to himself this spectacle, amid the ‘rainy weather, and the sneers,’ or wonder, ‘of the bystanders’? The memory of old Michael Johnson, rising from

the far distance; sad-beckoning in the ‘moonlight of memory:’ how he had toiled faithfully hither and thither; patiently among the lowest of the low; been buffeted and beaten down, yet ever risen again, ever tried it anew—And oh, when the wearied old man, as Bookseller, or Hawker, or Tinker, or whatsoever it was that Fate had reduced him to, begged help of *thee* for one day,—how savage, diabolic, was that mean Vanity, which answered, No! He sleeps now; after life’s fitful fever, he sleeps well: but thou, O Merciless, how now wilt thou still the sting of that remembrance?—The picture of Samuel Johnson standing bareheaded in the market there, is one of the grandest and saddest we can paint. Repentance! Repentance! he proclaims, as with passionate sobs: but only to the ear of Heaven, if Heaven will give him audience: the earthly ear and heart, that should have heard it, are now closed, unresponsive forever.

That this so keen-loving, soft-trembling Affectionateness, the inmost essence of his being, must have looked forth, in one form or another, through Johnson’s whole character, practical and intellectual, modifying both, is not to be doubted. Yet through what singular distortions and superstitions, moping melancholies, blind habits, whims about ‘entering with the right foot,’ and ‘touching every post as he walked along;’ and all the other mad chaotic lumber of a brain that, with sun-clear intellect, hovered forever on the verge of insanity,—must that same inmost essence have looked forth; unrecognisable to all but the most observant! Accordingly it was not recognised; Johnson passed not for a fine nature, but for a dull, almost brutal one. Might not, for example, the first-fruit of such a Lovingness, coupled with his quick Insight, have been expected to be a peculiarly courteous demeanour as man among men? In John-

son's 'Politeness,' which he often, to the wonder of some, asserted to be great, there was indeed somewhat that needed explanation. Nevertheless, if he insisted always on handing lady-visitors to their carriage; though with the certainty of collecting a mob of gazers in Fleet Street,—as might well be, the beau having on, by way of court-dress, 'his 'rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes for slippers, 'a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and 'the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches 'hanging loose:'—in all this we can see the spirit of true Politeness, only shining through a strange medium. Thus again, in his apartments, at one time, there were unfortunately no chairs. 'A gentleman who frequently visited him 'whilst writing his *Idlers*, constantly found him at his desk, 'sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he 'remarked that Johnson never forgot its defect; but would 'either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure 'against some support; taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor,'—who meanwhile, we suppose, sat upon folios, or in the sartorial fashion. 'It was remarkable in 'Johnson,' continues Miss Reynolds (*Renny dear*), 'that no 'external circumstances ever prompted him to make any 'apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence. Whether this was the effect of philosophic pride, or of some 'partial notion of his respecting high-breeding, is doubtful.' That it *was*, for one thing, the effect of genuine Politeness, is nowise doubtful. Not of the Pharisaical Brummellean Politeness, which would suffer crucifixion rather than ask twice for soup: but the noble universal Politeness of a man that knows the dignity of men, and feels his own; such as may be seen in the patriarchal bearing of an Indian Sachem; such as Johnson himself exhibited, when a sudden chance brought him into dialogue with his King. To us,

with our view of the man, it nowise appears 'strange' that he should have boasted himself cunning in the laws of Politeness; nor 'stranger still,' habitually attentive to practise them.

More legibly is this influence of the Loving heart to be traced in his intellectual character. What, indeed, is the beginning of intellect, the first inducement to the exercise thereof, but attraction towards somewhat, *affection* for it? Thus too, who ever saw, or will see, any true talent, not to speak of genius, the foundation of which is not goodness, love? From Johnson's strength of Affection, we deduce many of his intellectual peculiarities; especially that threatening array of perversions, known under the name of 'Johnson's Prejudices.' Looking well into the root from which these sprang, we have long ceased to view them with hostility, can pardon and reverently pity them. Consider with what force early-imbibed opinions must have clung to a soul of this Affection. Those evil-famed Prejudices of his, that Jacobitism, Church-of-Englandism, hatred of the Scotch, belief in Witches, and suchlike, what were they but the ordinary beliefs of well-doing, well-meaning provincial Englishmen in that day? First gathered by his Father's hearth; round the kind 'country fires' of native Staffordshire; they grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength: they were hallowed by fondest sacred recollections; to part with them was parting with his heart's blood. If the man who has no strength of Affection, strength of Belief, have no strength of Prejudice, let him thank Heaven for it, but to himself take small thanks.

Melancholy it was, indeed, that the noble Johnson could not work himself loose from these adhesions; that he could only purify them, and wear them with some nobleness. Yet let us understand how they grew out from the very centre

of his being: nay moreover, how they came to cohere in him with what formed the business and worth of his Life, the sum of his whole Spiritual Endeavour. For it is on the same ground that he became throughout an Edifier and Repairer, not, as the others of his make were, a Puller-down; that in an age of universal Scepticism, England was still to produce its Believer. Mark too his candour even here; while a Dr. Adams, with placid surprise, asks, "Have we not evidence enough of the soul's immortality?" Johnson answers, "I wish for more."

But the truth is, in Prejudice, as in all things, Johnson was the product of England; one of those *good* yeomen whose limbs were made in England: alas, the last of *such* Invincibles, their day being now done! His culture is wholly English; that not of a Thinker but of a 'Scholar:' his interests are wholly English; he sees and knows nothing but England; he is the John Bull of Spiritual Europe: let him live, love him, as he was and could not but be! Pitiable it is, no doubt, that a Samuel Johnson must confute Hume's irreligious Philosophy by some 'story from a Clergyman of the Bishoprick of Durham;' should see nothing in the great Frederick but 'Voltaire's lackey;' in Voltaire himself but a man *acerrimi ingenii, paucarum literarum*; in Rousseau but one worthy to be hanged; and in the universal, long-prepared, inevitable Tendency of European Thought but a green-sick milkmaid's crotchet of, for variety's sake, 'milking the Bull.' Our good, dear John! Observe too what it is that he sees in the city of Paris: no feeblest glimpse of those D'Alemberts and Diderots, or of the strange questionable work they did; solely some Benedictine Priests, to talk kitchen-latin with them about *Editiones Principes*. "*Monsheer Nongtongpaw!*"—Our dear, foolish John: yet is there a lion's heart within him!—Pitiable all these things were, we say; yet nowise inexcusable; nay,

as basis or as foil to much else that was in Johnson, almost venerable. Ought we not, indeed, to honour England, and English Institutions and Way of Life, that they could still equip such a man; could furnish him in heart and head to be a Samuel Johnson, and yet to love them, and unyieldingly fight for them? What truth and living vigour must such Institutions once have had, when, in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, there was still enough left in them for this!

It is worthy of note that, in our little British Isle, the two grand Antagonisms of Europe should have stood embodied, under their very highest concentration, in two men produced simultaneously among ourselves. Samuel Johnson and David Hume, as was observed, were children nearly of the same year: through life they were spectators of the same Life-movement; often inhabitants of the same city. Greater contrast, in all things, between two great men, could not be. Hume, well-born, competently provided for, whole in body and mind, of his own determination forces a way into Literature: Johnson, poor, moonstruck, diseased, forlorn, is forced into it 'with the bayonet of necessity at his back.' And what a part did they severally play there! As Johnson became the father of all succeeding Tories; so was Hume the father of all succeeding Whigs, for his own Jacobitism was but an accident, as worthy to be named Prejudice as any of Johnson's. Again, if Johnson's culture was exclusively English; Hume's, in Scotland, became European;—for which reason too we find his influence spread deeply over all quarters of Europe, traceable deeply in all speculation, French, German, as well as domestic; while Johnson's name, out of England, is hardly anywhere to be met with. In spiritual stature they are almost equal; both great, among the greatest: yet how unlike in likeness!

Hume has the widest, methodising, comprehensive eye; Johnson the keenest for perspicacity and minute detail: so had, perhaps chiefly, their education ordered it. Neither of the two rose into Poetry; yet both to some approximation thereof: Hume to something of an Epic clearness and method, as in his delineation of the Commonwealth Wars; Johnson to many a deep Lyric tone of plaintiveness and impetuous graceful power, scattered over his fugitive compositions. Both, rather to the general surprise, had a certain rugged Humour shining through their earnestness: the indication, indeed, that they *were* earnest men, and had *subdued* their wild world into a kind of temporary home and safe dwelling. Both were, by principle and habit, Stoics: yet Johnson with the greater merit, for he alone had very much to triumph over; farther, he alone ennobled his Stoicism into Devotion. To Johnson Life was as a Prison, to be endured with heroic faith: to Hume it was little more than a foolish Bartholomew-Fair Show-booth, with the foolish crowdings and elbowings of which it was not worth while to quarrel; the whole would break up, and be at liberty, so *soon*. Both realised the highest task of Manhood, that of living like men; each died not unfitly, in his way: Hume as one, with factitious, half-false gaiety, taking leave of what was itself wholly but a Lie: Johnson as one, with awe-struck, yet resolute and piously expectant heart, taking leave of a Reality, to enter a Reality still higher. Johnson had the harder problem of it, from first to last: whether, with some hesitation, we can admit that he was intrinsically the better-gifted, may remain undecided.

These two men now rest; the one in Westminster Abbey here; the other in the Calton-Hill Churchyard of Edinburgh. Through Life they did not meet: as contrasts, 'like in unlike,' love each other; so might they two have loved, and

communed kindly,—had not the terrestrial dross and darkness that was in them withstood! One day, their spirits, what Truth was in each, will be found working, living in harmony and free union, even here below. They were the two half-men of their time: whoso should combine the intrepid Candour and decisive scientific Clearness of Hume, with the Reverence, the Love and devout Humility of Johnson, were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor England with half-men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar! Be both attentively regarded, let the true Effort of both prosper;—and for the present, both take our affectionate farewell!

. . . GOETHE'S WORKS.

GOETHE'S WORKS.¹

[1832.]

IT is now four years since we specially invited attention to this Book; first in an essay on the graceful little fantasy-piece of *Helena*, then in a more general one on the merits and workings of Goethe himself: since which time two important things have happened in reference to it; for the publication, advancing with successful regularity, reached its fortieth and last volume in 1830; and now, still more emphatically to conclude both this 'completed, final edition,' and all other editions, endeavours and attainments of one in whose hands lay so much, come tidings that the venerable man has been recalled from our earth, and of his long labours and high faithful stewardship we have had what was appointed us.

The greatest epoch in a man's life is not always his death; yet for bystanders, such as contemporaries, it is always the most noticeable. All other epochs are transition-points from one visible condition to another visible; the days of their occurrence are like any other days, from which only the clearer-sighted will distinguish them; bridges they are, over which the smooth highway runs continuous,

¹ FOREIGN QUARTERLY REVIEW, No. 19.—*Goethes Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand* (Goethe's Works. Completed, final Edition), 40 voll. Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1827-30.

as if no Rubicon were there. But the day in a mortal's destinies which is like no other is his death-day: here, too, is a transition, what we may call a bridge, as at other epochs; but now from the keystone onwards half the arch rests on invisibility; this is a transition out of visible Time into invisible Eternity.

Since Death, as the palpable revelation (not to be overlooked by the dullest) of the mystery of wonder and depth and fear, which everywhere from beginning to ending through its whole course and movement lies under Life, is in any case so great,—we find it not unnatural that hereby a new look of greatness, a new interest should be impressed on whatsoever has preceded it and led to it; that even towards some man, whose history did not then first become significant, the world should turn, at his departure, with a quite peculiar earnestness, and now seriously ask itself a question, perhaps never seriously asked before, What the purport and character of his presence here was; now when he has gone hence, and is not present here, and will remain absent forevermore. It is the conclusion that crowns the work; much more the irreversible conclusion wherein all is concluded: thus is there no life so mean but a death will make it memorable.

At all lykewakes, accordingly, the doings and endurances of the Departed are the theme: rude souls, rude tongues grow eloquently busy with him; a whole septuagint of bel-dames are striving to render, in such dialect as they have, the small bible, or apocrypha, of his existence, for the general perusal. The least famous of mankind will for once become public, and have his name printed, and read not without interest: in the Newspaper Obituaries; on some frail memorial, under which he has crept to sleep. Foolish love-sick girls know that there is one method to impress the

obdurate false Lovelace, and wring his bosom; the method of drowning: foolish ruined dandies, whom the tailor will no longer trust, and the world turning on its heel is about forgetting, can recall it to attention by report of pistol; and so, in a worthless death, if in a worthless life no more, reattain the topgallant of renown,—for one day. Death is ever a sublimity and supernatural wonder, were there no other left: the last act of a most strange drama, which is not dramatic, but has now become real; wherein, miraculously, Furies, god-missioned, have in actual person risen from the abyss, and do verily dance there in that terror of all terrors, and wave their dusky-glaring torches, and shake their serpent-hair! Out of which heart-thrilling, so authentically tragic fifth-act there goes, as we said, a new meaning over all the other four; making them likewise tragic and authentic, and memorable in some measure, were they formerly the sorriest pickle-herring farce.

But above all, when a Great Man dies, then has the time come for putting us in mind that he was alive; biographies and biographic sketches, criticisms, characters, anecdotes, reminiscences, issue forth as from opened springing fountains; the world, with a passion whetted by impossibility, will yet a while retain, yet a while speak with, though only to the unanswering echoes, what it has lost without remedy: thus is the last event of life often the loudest; and real spiritual *Apparitions* (who have been named Men), as false imaginary ones are fabled to do, vanish in thunder.

For ourselves, as regards the great Goethe, if not seeking to be foremost in this natural movement, neither do we shun to mingle in it. The life and ways of such men as he, are, in all seasons, a matter profitable to contemplate, to speak of: if in this death-season, long with a sad reverence

looked forward to, there has little increase of light, little change of feeling arisen for the writer, a readier attention, nay a certain expectancy, from some readers is call sufficient. Innumerable meditations and disquisitions on this subject must yet pass through the minds of men; on all sides must it be taken up, by various observers, by successive generations, and ever a new light may evolve itself: why should not this observer, on this side, set down what he partially has seen into; and the necessary process thereby be forwarded, at any rate continued?

A continental Humorist, of deep-piercing, resolute though strangely perverse faculty, whose works are as yet but sparingly if at all cited in English literature, has written a chapter, somewhat in the nondescript manner of metaphysico-rhetorical, homiletic-exegetic rhapsody, on the *Greatness of Great Men*; which topic we agree with him in reckoning one of the most pregnant. The time, indeed, is come when much that was once found visibly subsistent Without must anew be sought for Within; many a human feeling, indestructible and to man's well-being indispensable, which once manifested itself in expressive forms to the Sense, now lies hidden in the *formless* depths of the Spirit, or at best struggles out obscurely in forms become superannuated, altogether inexpressive and unrecognisable; from which paralysed imprisoned state, often the best effort of the thinker is required, and moreover were well applied, to deliver it. For if the Present is to be the 'living sum-total of the whole Past,' nothing that ever lived in the Past must be let wholly die; whatsoever was done, whatsoever was said or written aforetime was done and written for our edification. In such state of imprisonment, paralysis and unrecognisable defacement, as compared with its condition in the old ages, lies this our feeling towards great men; wherein, and in the much else

that belongs to it, some of the deepest human interests will be found involved. A few words from Herr Professor Teufelsdröckh, if they help to set this preliminary matter in a clearer light, may be worth translating here. Let us first remark with him, however, 'how wonderful in all cases, great or little, is the importance of man to man.'

'Deny it as he will,' says Teufelsdröckh, 'man reverently loves man, and daily by action evidences his belief in the divineness of man. What a more than regal mystery encircles the poorest of living souls for us! The highest is not independent of him; his suffrage has value: could the highest monarch convince himself that the humblest beggar with sincere mind despised him, no serried ranks of halberdiers and bodyguards could shut out some little twinge of pain; some emanation from the low had pierced into the bosom of the high. Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.'

'Thus too has that fierce false hunting after Popularity, which you often wonder at, and laugh at, a basis on something true: nay, under the other aspect, what is that wonderful spirit of Interference, were it but manifested as the paltriest scandal and tea-table backbiting, other than inversely or directly, a heartfelt indestructible sympathy of man with man? Hatred itself is but an inverse love. The philosopher's wife complained to the philosopher that certain two-legged animals without feathers spake evil of him, spitefully criticised his goings out and comings in; wherein she too failed not of her share: "Light of my life," answered the philosopher, "it is their love of us, unknown to themselves, and taking a foolish shape; thank them for it, and do thou love them more wisely. Were we mere steam-engines working here under this roof-tree, they

‘ would scorn to speak of us once in a twelvemonth.” The
 ‘ last stage of human perversion, it has been said, is when
 ‘ sympathy corrupts itself into envy; and the indestructible
 ‘ interest we take in men’s doings has become a joy over
 ‘ their faults and misfortunes: this is the last and lowest
 ‘ stage; lower than this we cannot go: the absolute petri-
 ‘ faction of indifference is not attainable on this side total
 ‘ death.

‘ And now,’ continues the Professor, ‘ rising from these
 ‘ lowest tea-table regions of human communion into the
 ‘ higher and highest, is there not still in the world’s de-
 ‘ meanour towards Great Men, enough to make the old
 ‘ practice of *Hero-worship* intelligible, nay significant? Sim-
 ‘ pleton! I tell thee *Hero-worship* still continues; it is the
 ‘ only creed which never and nowhere grows or can grow
 ‘ obsolete. For always and everywhere this remains a true
 ‘ saying: *Il y a dans le cœur humain un fibre religieux*. Man
 ‘ always *worships* something; always he sees the Infinite
 ‘ shadowed forth in something finite; and indeed can and
 ‘ must so see it in *any* finite thing, once tempt him well to
 ‘ *fix* his eyes thereon. Yes, in practice, be it in theory
 ‘ or not, we are all Supernaturalists; and have an infinite
 ‘ happiness or an infinite woe not only waiting us here-
 ‘ after, but looking out on us through any pitifulest present
 ‘ good or evil;—as, for example, on a high poetic Byron
 ‘ through his lameness; as on all young souls through their
 ‘ first lovesuit; as on older souls, still more foolishly, through
 ‘ many a lawsuit, paper-battle, political horse-race or ass-
 ‘ race. Atheism, it has been said, is impossible; and truly,
 ‘ if we will consider it, no Atheist denies a Divinity, but
 ‘ only some NAME (*Nomen, Numen*) of a Divinity: the God is
 ‘ still present there, working in that benighted heart, were
 ‘ it only as a god of darkness. Thousands of stern Sans-

‘culottes, to seek no other instance, go chanting martyr-hymns to their guillotine: these spurn at the name of a God; yet worship one (as hapless “Proselytes without the Gate”) under the new pseudonym of Freedom. What indeed is all this that is called political fanaticism, revolutionary madness, force of hatred, force of love and so forth, but merely, under new designations, that same wondrous, wonder-working reflex from the Infinite, which in all times has given the Finite its empyrean or tartarean hue, thereby its blessedness or cursedness, its marketable worth or unworth?

‘Remark, however, as illustrative of several things, and more to the purpose here, that man does in strict speech always remain the clearest symbol of the Divinity to man. Friend Novalis, the devoutest heart I knew, and of purest depth, has not scrupled to call man, what the Divine Man is called in Scripture, a “Revelation in the Flesh.” “There is but one temple in the world,” says he, “and that is the body of man. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body.” In which notable words a reader that meditates them may find such meaning and scientific accuracy as will surprise him.

‘The ages of superstition, it appears to be sufficiently known, are behind us. To no man, were he never so heroic, are shrines any more built, and vows offered as to one having supernatural power. The sphere of the TRANSCENDENTAL cannot now, by that avenue of heroic worth, of eloquent wisdom, or by any other avenue, be so easily reached. The worth that in these days could *transcend* all estimate or survey, and lead men willingly captive into *infinite* admiration, into worship, is still waited for (with little hope) from the unseen Time. All that can be said to

‘offer itself in that kind, at present, is some slight household devotion (*Haus-Andacht*), whereby this or the other enthusiast, privately in all quietness, can love his hero or sage without measure, and idealise, and so, in a sense, idolise him;—which practice, as man is by necessity an idol-worshipper (no offence in him so long as *idol* means accurately *vision*, clear *symbol*), and all wicked idolatry is but a *more* idolatrous worship, may be excusable, in certain cases praiseworthy. Be this as it will, let the curious eye gratify itself in observing how the old antediluvian feeling still, though now struggling out so imperfectly, and forced into unexpected shapes, asserts its existence in the newest man: and the Chaldeans or old Persians, with their Zerdusht, differ only in vesture and dialect from the French, with their Voltaire *étouffé sous des roses*.’²

This, doubtless, is a wonderful phraseology, but referable, as the Professor urges, to that capacious reservoir and convenience, ‘the nature of the time.’ ‘A time,’ says he, ‘when, as in some Destruction of a Roman Empire, wrecks of old things are everywhere confusedly jumbled with rudiments of new; so that, till once the mixture and amalgamation be complete, and even have long continued complete and universally apparent, no grammatical *langue d’oc* or *langue d’oui* can establish itself, but only some barbarous mixed *lingua rustica*, more like a jargon than a language, must prevail; and thus the deepest matters be either barbarously spoken of, or wholly omitted and lost sight of, which were still worse.’ But to let the Homily proceed:

‘Consider, at any rate,’ continues he elsewhere, ‘under how many categories, down to the most impertinent, the world inquires concerning Great Men, and never wearies

² *Die Kleider: ihr Werden und Wirken*. Von D. TEUFELSDRÖCKH. Weissnichtwo, Stillschweign’sche Buchhandlung, 1830.

‘ striving to represent to itself their whole structure, aspect,
‘ procedure, outward and inward ! Blame not the world for
‘ such minutest curiosity about its great ones : this comes
‘ of the world’s old-established necessity to worship : and,
‘ indeed, whom but its great ones, that “like celestial fire-
‘ pillars go before it on the march,” ought it to worship ?
‘ Blame not even that mistaken worship of sham great ones,
‘ that are not celestial fire-pillars, but terrestrial glass-lan-
‘ terns with wick and tallow, under no guidance but a stupid
‘ fatuous one ; of which worship the litanies and gossip-
‘ homilies are, in some quarters of the globe, so inexpressibly
‘ uninteresting. Blame it not ; pity it rather, with a certain
‘ loving respect.

‘ Man is never, let me assure thee, altogether a clothes-
‘ horse : under the clothes there is always a body and a soul.
‘ The Count von Bügeleisen, so idolised by our fashionable
‘ classes, is not, as the English Swift asserts, created wholly
‘ by the Tailor ; but partially also by the supernatural Powers.
‘ His beautifully-cut apparel, and graceful expensive tackle
‘ and environment of all kinds, are but the symbols of a
‘ beauty and gracefulness, supposed to be inherent in the
‘ Count himself ; under which predicament come also our
‘ reverence for his counthood, and in good part that other
‘ notable phenomenon of his being worshipped because he *is*
‘ worshipped, of one idolater, sheep-like, running after him,
‘ because many have already run. Nay, on what other prin-
‘ ciple but this latter hast thou, O reader (if thou be not one
‘ of a thousand), read, for example, thy *Homer*, and found
‘ some real joy therein ? All these things, I say, the apparel,
‘ the counthood, the existing popularity and whatever else
‘ can combine there, are symbols ;—bank-notes, which, whe-
‘ ther there be gold behind them, or only bankruptcy and
‘ empty drawers, pass current for gold. But how, now, could

‘ they so pass, if gold itself were not prized, and believed
‘ and known to be somewhere extant? Produce the actual
‘ gold visibly, and mark how, in these distrustful days, your
‘ most accredited bank-paper stagnates in the market! No
‘ Holy Alliance, though plush and gilding and genealogical
‘ parchment, to the utmost that the time yields, be hung
‘ round it, can gain for itself a dominion in the heart of any
‘ man; some thirty or forty millions of men’s hearts being,
‘ on the other hand, subdued into loyal reverence by a Cor-
‘ sican Lieutenant of Artillery. Such is the difference between
‘ God-creation and Tailor-creation. Great is the Tailor, but
‘ not the greatest. So, too, in matters spiritual, what avails
‘ it that a man be Doctor of the Sorbonne, Doctor of Laws,
‘ of Both Laws; and can cover half a square foot in pica-
‘ type with the list of his fellowships, arranged as equilateral
‘ triangle, at the vertex an “&c.” over and above, and with
‘ the parchment of his diplomas could thatch the whole
‘ street he lives in: what avails it? The man is but an
‘ owl; of prepossessing gravity, indeed; much respected by
‘ simple neighbours; but to whose sorrowful hootings no
‘ creature hastens, eager to listen. While, again, let but
‘ some riding gauger arrive under cloud of night at a Scot-
‘ tish inn, and word be whispered that it is Robert Burns;
‘ in few instants all beds and trucklebeds, from garret to
‘ cellar, are left vacant, and gentle and simple, with open
‘ eyes and erect ears, are gathered together.’

Whereby, at least, from amid this questionable *lingua*,
‘ more like a jargon than a language,’ so much may have
become apparent: What unspeakable importance the world
attaches, has ever attached (expressing the same by all pos-
sible methods) and will ever attach, to its great men. Deep
and venerable, whether looked at in the Teufelsdröckh man-
ner or otherwise, is this love of men for great men, this

their exclusive admiration of great men; a quality of vast significance, if we consider it well; for, as in its origin it reaches up into the highest and even holiest provinces of man's nature, so in his practical history it will be found to play the most surprising part. Does not, for one example, the fact of such a temper indestructibly existing in all men, point out man as an essentially governable and teachable creature, and forever refute that calumny of his being by nature insubordinate, prone to rebellion? Men seldom, or rather never for a length of time and deliberately, rebel against anything that does not deserve rebelling against. Ready, ever zealous is the obedience and devotedness they show to the great, to the really high; prostrating their whole possession and self, body, heart, soul and spirit, under the feet of whatsoever is authentically above them. Nay, in most times, it is rather a slavish devotedness to those who only seem and pretend to be above them that constitutes their fault.

But why seek special instances? Is not Love, from of old, known to be the beginning of all things? And what is admiration of the great but love of the truly lovable? The first product of love is *imitation*, that all-important peculiar gift of man, whereby Mankind is not only held socially together in the present time, but connected in like union with the past and the future; so that the attainment of the innumerable Departed can be conveyed down to the Living, and transmitted with increase to the Unborn. Now great men, in particular spiritually great men (for all men have a spirit to guide, though all have not kingdoms to govern and battles to fight), are the men universally imitated and learned of, the glass in which whole generations survey and shape themselves.

Thus is the Great Man of an age, beyond comparison,

the most important phenomenon therein; all other phenomena, were they Waterloo Victories, Constitutions of the Year One, glorious revolutions, new births of the golden age in what sort you will, are small and trivial. Alas, all these pass away, and are left extinct behind, like the tar-barrels they were celebrated with; and the new-born golden age proves always to be still-born: neither is there, was there or will there be any other golden age possible, save only in this: in new increase of worth and wisdom;—that is to say, therefore, in the new arrival among us of wise and worthy men. Such arrivals are the great occurrences, though unnoticed ones; all else that can occur, in what kind soever, is but the *road*, up-hill or down-hill, rougher or smoother; nowise the *power* that will nerve us for travelling forward thereon. So little comparatively can forethought or the cunningest mechanical precontrivance do for a nation, for a world! Ever must we wait on the bounty of Time, and see what leader shall be born for us, and whither he will lead.

Thus too, in defect of great men, noted men become important: the Noted Man of an age is the emblem and living summary of the Ideal which that age has fashioned for itself: show me the noted man of an age, you show me the age that produced him. Such figures walk in the van, for great good or for great evil; if not leading, then driven and still farther misleading. The apotheosis of Beau Brummel has marred many a pretty youth; lauded him not at any *goal* where oak garlands, earned by faithful labour and valour, carry men to the immortal gods; but, by a fatal inversion, at the King's Bench *gaol*, where he that has never sowed shall not any longer reap, still less any longer burn his barn, but scrape himself with potsherds among the ashes thereof, and consider with all deliberation 'what he wanted, and what he wants.'

To enlighten this principle of reverence for the great, to teach us reverence, and whom we are to revere and admire, should ever be a chief aim of Education (indeed it is herein that instruction properly both begins and ends); and in these late ages, perhaps more than ever, so indispensable is now our need of clear reverence, so inexpressibly poor our supply. 'Clear reverence!' it was once responded to a seeker of light: 'all want it, perhaps thou thyself.' What wretched idols, of Leeds cloth, stuffed out with bran of one kind or other, do men either worship, or being tired of worshipping (so expensively without fruit), rend in pieces and kick out of doors, amid loud shouting and crowing, what they call 'tremendous cheers,' as if the feat were miraculous! In private life, as in public, delusion in this sort does its work; the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.

'For, alas,' cries Teufelsdröckh on this occasion, 'though
' in susceptible hearts it is felt that a great man is unspeak-
' ably great, the specific marks of him are mournfully mis-
' taken: thus must innumerable pilgrims journey, in toil and
' hope, to shrines where there is no healing. On the fairer
' half of the creation, above all, such error presses hard.
' Women are born worshippers; in their good little hearts
' lies the most craving relish for greatness: it is even said,
' each chooses her husband on the hypothesis of his being
' a great man—in his way. The good creatures, yet the
' foolish! For their choices, no insight, or next to none,
' being vouchsafed them, are unutterable. Yet how touching
' also to see, for example, Parisian ladies of quality, all rust-
' ling in silks and laces, visit the condemned-cell of a fierce
' Cartouche; and in silver accents, and with the looks of
' angels, beg locks of hair from him; as from the greatest,
' were it only in the profession of highwayman! Still more
' fatal is that other mistake, the commonest of all, whereby

‘ the devotional youth, seeking for a great man to worship, finds such within his own worthy person, and proceeds with all zeal to worship *there*. Unhappy enough: to realise, in an age of such gas-light illumination, this basest superstition of the ages of Egyptian darkness!

‘ Remark, however, not without emotion, that of all rituals and divine services and ordinances ever instituted for the worship of any god, this of Self-worship is the ritual most faithfully observed. Trouble enough has the Hindoo devotee, with his washings and cookings and perplexed formularies, tying him up at every function of his existence: but is it greater trouble than that of his German self-worshipping brother; is it trouble even by the devoutest Fakir, so honestly undertaken and fulfilled? I answer, No; for the German’s heart is in it. The German worshipper, for whom does he work, and scheme, and struggle, and fight, at his rising up and lying down, in all times and places, but for his god only? Can he escape from that divine presence of Self; can his heart waver, or his hand wax faint in that sacred service? The Hebrew Jonah, prophet as he was, rather than take a message to Nineveh, took ship to Tarshish, hoping to hide there from his Sender; but in what ship-hull or whale’s belly shall the madder German Jonah cherish hope of hiding from—Himself! Consider, too, the temples he builds, and the services of (shoulder-knotted) priests he ordains and maintains; the smoking sacrifices, thrice a day or oftener, with perhaps a psalmist or two of broken-winded laureats and literators, if such are to be had. Nor are his votive gifts wanting, of rings and jewels and gold embroideries, such as our Lady of Loretto might grow yellower to look upon. A toilsome, perpetual worship, heroically gone through: and then with what issue? Alas, with the worst. The old Egyptian leek-

' worshipper had, it is to be hoped, seasons of light and
 ' faith: his leek-god seems to smile on him; he is humbled,
 ' and in humility exalted, before the majesty of something,
 ' were it only that of germinative Physical Nature, seen
 ' through a germinating, not unnourishing potherb. The
 ' Self-worshipper, again, has no seasons of light, which are
 ' not of blue sulphur-light; hungry, envious pride, not hu-
 ' mility in any sort, is the ashy fruit of his worship; his self-
 ' god growls on him with the perpetual wolf-cry, Give! Give!
 ' and your devout Byron, as the Frau Hunt, with a wise
 ' simplicity (*geistreich naïv*), once said, "must sit sulking like
 ' a great schoolboy, in pet because they have given him a
 ' plain bun and not a spiced one."—His bun was a life-rent
 ' of God's universe, with the tasks it offered, and the tools
 ' to do them with; *à priori*, one might have fancied it could
 ' be put up with for once.'

After which wondrous glimpses into the Teufelsdröckh
 Homily on the *Greatness of Great Men*, it may now be high
 time to proceed with the matter more in hand; and remark
 that our own much-calumniated age, so fruitful in noted men,
 is also not without its great. In noted men, undoubtedly
 enough, we surpass all ages since the creation of the world;
 and from two plain causes: First, that there has been a
 French Revolution, and that there is now pretty rapidly
 proceeding a European Revolution; whereby everything, as
 in the Term-day of a great city, when all mortals are re-
 moving, has been, so to speak, set out into the street; and
 many a foolish vessel of dishonour, unnoticed and worth no
 notice in its own dark corner, has become universally recog-
 nisable when once mounted on the summit of some furniture-
 wagon, and tottering there (as Committee-president, or other
 head-director), with what is put under it, slowly onwards

to its new lodging and arrangement, itself, alas, hardly to get thither without *breakage*. Secondly, that the Printing Press, with stitched and loose leaves, has now come into full action; and makes, as it were, a sort of universal daylight, for removal and revolution and everything else to proceed in, far more commodiously, yet also far more conspicuously. A complaint has accordingly been heard that famous men abound, that we are quite overrun with famous men: however, the remedy lies in the disease itself; crowded succession already means quick oblivion. For wagon after wagon rolls off, and either arrives or is upset; and so, in either case, the vessel of dishonour, which, at worst, we saw only in crossing some street, will afflict us no more.

Of great men, among so many millions of noted men, it is computed that in our time there have been Two; one in the practical, another in the speculative province: Napoleon Buonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In which dual number, inconsiderable as it is, our time may perhaps specially pride itself, and take precedence of many others; in particular, reckon itself the flower-time of the whole last century and half. Every age will, no doubt, have its superior man or men; but one so superior as to take rank among the high of all ages, this is what we call a great man; this rarely makes his appearance, such bounty of Nature and Accident must combine to produce and unfold him. Of Napoleon and his works all ends of the world have heard: for *such* a host marched not in silence through the frightened deep: few heads there are in this Planet which have not formed to themselves some featured or featureless image of him; his history has been written about, on the great scale and on the small, some millions of times, and still remains to be written: one of our highest literary problems. For such a 'light-nimbus' of glory and renown encircled the man; the environ-

ment he walked in was itself so stupendous, that the eye grew dazzled, and mistook his proportions; or quite turned away from him in pain and temporary blindness. Thus even among the clear-sighted there is no unanimity about Napoleon; and only here and there does his own greatness begin to be interpreted, and accurately separated from the mere greatness of his fame and fortune.

Goethe, again, though of longer continuance in the world, and intrinsically of much more unquestionable greatness and even importance there, could not be so noted by the world: for if the explosion of powder-mines and artillery-parks naturally attracts every eye and ear; the approach of a new-created star (dawning on us, in new-created radiance, from the eternal Deeps!), though *this*, and not the artillery-parks, is to shape our destiny and *rule* the lower earth, is notable at first only to certain stargazers and weather-prophets. Among ourselves especially, Goethe had little recognition: indeed, it was only of late that his existence, as a man and not as a mere sound, became authentically known to us; and some shadow of his high endowments and endeavours, and of the high meaning that might lie therein, arose in the general mind of England, even of intelligent England. Five years ago, to rank him with Napoleon, like him as rising unattainable beyond his class, like him and more than he of quite peculiar moment to all Europe, would have seemed a wonderful procedure; candour even, and enlightened liberality, to grant him place beside this and the other home-born ready-writer, blessed with that special privilege of 'English cultivation,' and able thereby to write novels, heart-captivating, heart-rending, or of enchaining interest.

Since which time, however, let us say, the progress of clearer apprehension has been rapid and satisfactory: innumerable unmusical voices have already fallen silent on this

matter; for in fowls of every feather, even in the pertest choughs and thievish magpies, there dwells a singular reverence of the eagle; no Dulness is so courageous, but if you once show it any gleam of a heavenly Resplendence, it will, at lowest, shut its eyes and say nothing. So fares it here with the old-established British critic; who, indeed, in these days of ours, begins to be strangely situated; so many new things rising on his horizon, black indefinable shapes, magical or not; the old brickfield (where he kneaded insufficient marketable bricks) all stirring under his feet; preternatural, mad-making tones in the earth and air;—with all which what shall an old-established British critic and brickmaker do, but, at wisest, put his hands in his pockets, and, with the face and heart of a British mastiff, though amid dismal enough forebodings, see what it will turn to?

In the younger, more hopeful minds, again, in most minds that can be considered as in a state of growth, German literature is taking its due place: in such, and in generations of other such that are to follow them, some thankful appreciation of the greatest in German literature cannot fail; at all events this feeling that he *is* great and the greatest, whereby appreciation, and what alone is of much value, appropriation, first becomes rightly possible. To forward such on their way towards appropriating what excellence this man realised and created for them, somewhat has already been done, yet not much; much still waits to be done. The field, indeed, is large: there are Forty Volumes of the most significant Writing that has been produced for the last two centuries; there is the whole long Life and heroic Character of him who produced them; all this to expatiate over and inquire into; in both which departments the deepest thinker, and most far-sighted, may find scope enough.

Nevertheless, in these days of the ten-pound franchise,

when all the world (perceiving now, like the Irish innkeeper, that 'death and destruction are just coming in') will have itself represented in parliament; and the wits of so many are gone in this direction to gather wool, and must needs return more or less shorn; it were foolish to invite either young or old into great depths of thought on such a remote matter; the tendency of which is neither for the Reform Bill nor against it, but quietly *through* it and beyond it; no-wise to prescribe this or that mode of *electing* members, but only to produce a few members *worth* electing. Not for many years (who knows how many!) in these harassed, hand-to-mouth circumstances, can the world's bleared eyes open themselves to study the true import of such topics; of this topic, the highest of such. As things actually stand, some quite cursory glances, and considerations close on the surface, to remind a few (unelected, unelective) parties interested, that it lies over for study, are all that can be attempted here: could we, by any method, in any measure, disclose for such the wondrous wonder-working *element* it hovers in, the *light* it is to be studied and inquired-after in, what is needfulest at present were accomplished.

One class of considerations, near enough the surface, we avoid; all that partakes of an elegiac character. True enough, nothing can be *done* or suffered, but there is something to be *said*, wisely or unwisely. The departure of our Greatest contemporary Man could not be other than a great event; fitted to awaken, in all who with understanding beheld it, feelings sad, but high and sacred, of mortality and immortality, of mourning and of triumph; far lookings into the Past and into the Future,—so many changes, fearful and wonderful, of fleeting Time; glimpses too of the Eternity these rest on, which knows no change. At the present date and distance, however, all this pertains not to us; has been

uttered elsewhere, or may be left for utterance there. Let us consider the Exequies as past; that the high Rogus, with its sweet-scented wood, amid the wail of music eloquent to speechless hearts, has flamed aloft, heaven-kissing, in sight of all the Greeks; and that now the ashes of the Hero are gathered into their urn, and the host has marched onwards to new victories and new toils; ever to be mindful of the dead, not to mourn for him any more. The host of the Greeks, in this case, was all thinking Europe: whether their funeral games were appropriate and worthy, we stop not to inquire; the time, in regard to such things, is empty or ill-provided, and this was what the time could conveniently do. All canonisation and solemn cremation are gone by; and as yet nothing suitable, nothing that does not border upon parody, has appeared in their room. A Bentham bequeaths his remains to be lectured over in a school of anatomy; and perhaps, even in this way, finds, as chief of the Utilitarians, a really nobler funeral than any other, which the prosaic age, rich only in crapes and hollow scutcheons (of timber as of words), could have afforded him.

The matter in hand being *Goethe's Works*, and the greatest work of every man, or rather the summary and net amount of all his works, being the Life he has led, we ask, as the first question: How it went with Goethe in that matter; what was the practical basis, of want and fulfilment, of joy and sorrow, from which his spiritual productions grew forth; the characters of which they must more or less legibly bear? In which sense, those Volumes entitled by him *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, wherein his personal history, what he has thought fit to make known of it, stands delineated, will long be valuable. A noble commentary, instructive in many ways, lies opened there, and yearly increasing in worth and in-

terest; which all readers, now when the true quality of it is ascertained, will rejoice that circumstances induced and allowed him to write: for surely if old Cellini's counsel have any propriety, it is doubly proper in this case: the autobiographic practice he recommends (of which the last century in particular has seen so many worthy and worthless examples) was never so much in place as here. 'All men, of what rank soever,' thus counsels the brave Benvenuto, 'who have accomplished aught virtuous or virtuous-like, should, provided they be conscious of really good purposes, write down their own life; nevertheless, not put hand to so worthy an enterprise till after they have reached the age of forty.' All which ukase-regulations Goethe had abundantly fulfilled,—the last as abundantly as any, for he had now reached the age of sixty-two.

'This year, 1811,' says he, 'distinguishes itself for me by persevering outward activity. The *Life of Philip Hackert* went to press; the papers committed to me all carefully elaborated as the case required. By this task I was once more attracted to the South: the occurrences which, at that period, had befallen me there, in Hackert's company or neighbourhood, became alive in the imagination; I had cause to ask, Why this which I was doing for another should not be attempted for myself? I turned, accordingly, before completion of that volume, to my own earliest personal history; and, in truth, found here that I had delayed too long. The work should have been undertaken while my mother yet lived; thereby had I got nigher those scenes of childhood, and been, by her great strength of memory, transported into the midst of them. Now, however, must these vanished apparitions be recalled by my own help; and first, with labour, many an incitement to recollection, like a necessary magic apparatus, be devised. To represent the development of a child who had grown to be remarkable, how this exhibited itself under given circumstances, and yet how in general it could content the student of human nature and his views: such was the thing I had to do.

'In this sense, unpretendingly enough, to a work treated with

anxious fidelity, I gave the name *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (Truth and Fiction); deeply convinced that man in immediate Presence, still more in Remembrance, fashions and models the external world according to his own peculiarities.

‘The business, as, with historical studying, and otherwise recalling of places and persons, I had much time to spend on it, busied me wheresoever I went or stood, at home and abroad, to such a degree that my actual condition became like a secondary matter; though again, on all hands, when summoned outwards by occasion, I with full force and undivided sense proved myself present.’³

These Volumes, with what other supplementary matter has been added to them (the rather as Goethe’s was a life of manifold relation, of the widest connexion with important or elevated persons, not to be carelessly laid before the world, and he had the rare good fortune of arranging all things that regarded even his posthumous concernment with the existing generation, according to his own deliberate judgment), are perhaps likely to be, for a long time, our only authentic reference. By the last will of the deceased, it would seem, all his papers and effects are to lie exactly as they are, till after another twenty years.

Looking now into these magically-recalled scenes of childhood and manhood, the student of human nature will under all manner of shapes, from first to last, note one thing: The singularly complex Possibility offered from without, yet along with it the deep never-failing Force from within, whereby all this is conquered and realised. It was as if accident and primary endowment had conspired to produce a character on the great scale; a will is cast abroad into the widest, wildest element, and gifted also in an extreme degree to prevail over this, to fashion this to its own form: in which subordinating and self-fashioning of its cir-

³ *Werke*, xxxii. 62.

cumstances a character properly consists. In external situations, it is true, in occurrences such as could be recited in the Newspapers, Goethe's existence is not more complex than other men's; outwardly rather a pacific smooth existence: but in his inward specialties and depth of faculty and temper, in his position spiritual and temporal towards the world as it was, and the world as he could have wished it, the observant eye may discern complexity, perplexity enough; an extent of data greater, perhaps, than had lain in any life-problem for some centuries. And now, as mentioned, the force for solving this was, in like manner, granted him in extraordinary measure; so that we must say, his possibilities were faithfully and with wonderful success turned into acquisitions; and this man fought the good fight, not only victorious, as all true men are, but victorious without damage, and with an ever-increasing strength for new victory, as only great and happy men are. Not wounds and loss (beyond fast-healing skin-deep wounds) has the unconquerable to suffer; only ever-enduring toil; weariness,—from which, after rest, he will rise stronger than before.

Good fortune, what the world calls good fortune, awaits him from beginning to end; but also a far deeper felicity than this. Such worldly gifts of good fortune are what we call possibilities: happy he that can rule over them; but *doubly* unhappy he that cannot. Only in virtue of good guidance does that same good fortune prove good. Wealth, health, fiery light with Proteus many-sidedness of mind, peace, honour, length of days: with all this you may make no Goethe, but only some Voltaire; with the most that was fortuitous in all this, make only some short-lived, unhappy, unprofitable Byron.

At no period of the World's History can a gifted man be born when he will not find enough to do; in no circum-

stances come into life but there will be contradictions for him to reconcile, difficulties which it will task his whole strength to surmount, if his whole strength suffice. Everywhere the human soul stands between a hemisphere of light and another of darkness; on the confines of two everlastingly hostile empires, Necessity and Freewill. A pious adage says, 'the back is made for the burden;' we might with no less truth invert it, and say, the burden was made for the back. Nay, so perverse is the nature of man, it has in all times been found that an external allotment superior to the common was more dangerous than one inferior; thus for a hundred that can bear adversity, there is hardly one that can bear prosperity.

Of riches, in particular, as of the grossest species of prosperity, the perils are recorded by all moralists; and ever, as of old, must the sad observation from time to time occur: Easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle! Riches in a cultured community are the strangest of things; a power all-moving, yet which any the most powerless and skillless can *put* in motion; they are the *readiest* of possibilities; the readiest to become a great blessing or a great curse. 'Beneath gold thrones and mountains,' says Jean Paul, 'who knows how many giant spirits lie entombed!' The first fruit of riches, especially for the man born rich, is to teach him faith in them, and all but hide from him that there is any other faith: thus is he trained up in the miserable eye-service of what is called Honour, Respectability; instead of a man we have but a *gigman*,—one who 'always kept a gig,' two-wheeled or four-wheeled. Consider, too, what this same gigmanhood issues in; consider that first and most stupendous of gighmen, Phaeton, the son of Sol, who drove the brightest of all conceivable gigs, yet with the sorrowfulest result. Alas, Phaeton was his father's heir;

born to attain the highest fortune without earning it: he had *built* no sun-chariot (could not build the simplest wheelbarrow), but could and would insist on *driving* one; and so broke his own stiff neck, sent gig and horses spinning through infinite space, and set the universe on fire!—Or, to speak in more modest figures, Poverty, we may say, surrounds a man with ready-made barriers, which, if they mournfully gall and hamper, do at least prescribe for him and force on him a sort of course and goal; a safe and beaten though a circuitous course; great part of his guidance is secure against fatal error, is withdrawn from *his* control. The rich, again, has his whole life to guide, without goal or barrier, save of his own choosing; and tempted as we have seen, is too likely to guide it ill; often, instead of walking straight forward, as he might, does but, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick; in which process, it is clear, not the adamantine circle of Necessity whereon the World is built, but only his own limb-bones must go to pieces!—Truly, in plain prose, if we bethink us what a road many a Byron and Mirabeau, especially in these latter generations, have gone, it is proof of an uncommon inward wealth in Goethe, that the outward wealth, whether of money or other happiness which Fortune offered him, did in no case exceed the power of Nature to appropriate and wholesomely assimilate; that all outward blessedness grew to inward strength, and produced only blessed effects for him. Those ‘gold mountains’ of Jean Paul, to the giant that *can* rise above them are excellent, both fortified and speculative, heights; and do in fact become a *throne*, where happily they have not been a *tomb*.

Goethe's childhood is throughout of riant, joyful character: kind plenty in every sense, security, affection, manifold excitement, instruction encircles him; wholly an element

of sun and azure, wherein the young spirit, awakening and attaining, can on all hands richly unfold itself. A beautiful boy, of earnest, lucid, serenely deep nature, with the peaceful completeness yet infinite incessant expansiveness of a boy, has, in the fittest environment, begun to *be*: beautiful he looks and moves; rapid, gracefully prompt, like the son of Maia; wise, noble, like Latona's son: nay (as all men may *now* see) he is, in very truth, a miniature incipient World-Poet; of all heavenly figures the beautifullest we know of that can visit this lower earth. Lovely enough shine for us those young years in old Teutonic Frankfort; mirrored in the far remembrance of the Self-historian, real yet ideal, they are among our most genuine poetic Idyls. No smallest matter is too small for us, when we think *who* it was that did it or suffered it. The little long-clothed urchin, mercurial enough with all his stillness, can throw a whole cargo of new-marketed crockery, piece by piece, from the balcony into the street, when once the feat is suggested to him; and comically shatters cheap delf-ware with the same right hand which tragically wrote and hurled forth the demoniac scorn of Mephistopheles, or as 'right hand' of Faust, 'smote the universe to ruins.' Neither smile more than enough (if thou be wise) that the gray-haired all-experienced man remembers how the boy walked on the Mayn bridge, and 'liked to look at the bright weather-cock' on the barrier there. That foolish piece of gilt wood, there glittering sunlit, with its reflex wavering in the Mayn waters, is awakening quite another glitter in the young gifted soul: is not this foolish sunlit splendour also, now when there is an *eye* to behold it, one of Nature's doings? The eye of the young seer is here, through the paltriest chink, looking into the infinite Splendours of Nature,—where, one day, himself is to enter and dwell.

Goethe's mother appears to have been the more gifted of the parents: a woman of altogether genial character, great spiritual faculty and worth; whom the son, at an after time, put old family friends in mind of. It is gratifying for us that she lived to witness his maturity in works and honours; to know that the little infant she had nursed was grown to be a mighty man, the first man of his nation and time. In the father, as prosperous citizen of Frankfort, skilled in many things; improved by travel, by studies both practical and ornamental; decorated with some diplomatic title, but passing, among his books, paintings, collections and household possessions, social or intellectual, spiritual or material, a quite undiplomatic independent life, we become acquainted with a German, not country- but city-gentleman of the last century; a character scarcely ever familiar in our Islands; now perhaps almost obsolete among the Germans too. A positive, methodical man, sound-headed, honest-hearted, sharp-tempered; with an uncommon share of volition, among other things, so that scarcely any obstacle would turn him back, but whatsoever he could not mount over he would struggle round, and in any case *be* at the end of his journey: many or all of whose good qualities passed also over by inheritance; and, in fairer combination, on nobler objects, to the whole world's profit, were seen a second time in action.

Family incidents; house-buildings, or rebuildings; arrivals, departures; in any case, newyear's-days and birth-days, are not wanting; nor city-incidents; many-coloured tumult of Frankfort fairs; Kaisers' coronations, expected and witnessed; or that glorious ceremonial of the yearly *Pfeiffergericht*, wherein the grandfather himself plays so imperial a part. World-incidents too roll forth their billows into the remotest creek, and alter the current there. The Earth-

quake of Lisbon hurls the little Frankfort boy into wondrous depths of another sort; enunciating dark theological problems, which no theology of his will solve. Direction, instruction, in like manner, awaits him in the Great Frederic's Seven-Years War; especially in that long billeting of King's Lieutenant Comte de Thorane, with his sergeants and adjutants, with his painters and picture-easels, his quick precision and decision, his 'dry gallantry' and stately Spanish bearing;—though collisions with the 'house-father,' whose German house-stairs (though he silently endures the inevitable) were not new-built to be made a French highway of; who besides loves not the French, but the great invincible Fritz they are striving to beat down. Think, for example, of that singular congratulation on the Victory at Bergen:

'So then, at last, after a restless Passion-week, Passion-Friday, 1759, arrived. A deep stillness announced the approaching storm. We children were forbidden to leave the house; our father had no rest, and went out. The battle began; I mounted to the top story, where the field indeed was still out of my sight, but the thunder of the cannon and the volleys of the small arms could be fully discerned. After some hours, we saw the first tokens of the battle, in a row of wagons, whereon wounded men, in all sorts of sorrowful dismemberment and gesture, were driven softly past us to the Liebfrauen-Kloster, which had been changed into a hospital. The compassion of the citizens forthwith awoke. Beer, wine, bread, money were given to such as had still power of receiving. But when, ere long, wounded and captive Germans also were noticed in that train, the pity had no limits; it seemed as if each were bent to strip himself of whatever movable thing he had, to aid his countrymen therewith in their extremity.

'The prisoners, meanwhile, were the symptoms of a battle unprosperous for the Allies. My father, in his partiality, quite certain that these would gain, had the passionate rashness to go out to meet the expected visitors; not reflecting that the beaten side would in that case have to run over him. He went first into his garden, at the Friedberg Gate, where he found all quiet and solitary; then ventured

forth to the Bornheim Heath, where soon, however, various scattered outrunners and baggage-men came in sight, who took the satisfaction, as they passed, of shooting at the boundary-stones, and sent our eager wanderer the reverberated lead singing about his ears. He reckoned it wiser, therefore, to come back ; and learned on some inquiry, what the sound of the firing might already have taught him, that for the French all went well, and no retreat was thought of. Arriving home full of black humour, he quite, at sight of his wounded and prisoner countrymen, lost all composure. From him also many a gift went out for the passing wagons, but only Germans were to taste of it ; which arrangement, as Fate had so huddled friends and foes together, could not always be adhered to.

‘ Our mother, and we children, who had from the first built upon the Count’s word, and so passed a tolerably quiet day, were greatly rejoiced, and our mother doubly comforted, as she that morning, on questioning the oracle of her jewel-box by the scratch of a needle, had obtained a most consolatory answer not only for the present but for the future. We wished our father a similar belief and disposition ; we flattered him what we could, we entreated him to take some food, which he had forborne all day ; he refused our caresses and every enjoyment, and retired to his room. Our joy, in the mean while, was not disturbed ; the business was over : the King’s Lieutenant, who today, contrary to custom, had been on horseback, at length returned ; his presence at home was more needful than ever. We sprang out to meet him, kissed his hands, testified our joy. It seemed to please him greatly. “ Well ! ” said he, with more softness than usual, “ I am glad too for your sake, dear children.” He ordered us sweetmeats, sweet wine, everything the best, and went to his chamber, where already a mass of importuners, solicitors, petitioners, were crowded.

‘ We held now a dainty collation ; deplored our good father, who could not participate therein, and pressed our mother to bring him down ; she, however, knew better, and how uncheering such gifts would be to him. Meanwhile she had put some supper in order, and would fain have sent him up a little to his room ; but such irregularity was a thing he never suffered, not in extremest cases ; so the sweet gifts being once put aside, she set about entreating him to come down in his usual way. He yielded at last, unwillingly, and little

did we know what mischief we were making ready. The stairs ran free through the whole house, past the door of every ante-chamber. Our father, in descending, had to pass the Count's apartments. His ante-chamber was so full of people that he had at length resolved to come out, and despatch several at once; and this happened, alas, just at the instant our father was passing down. The Count stepped cheerfully out, saluted him and said: "You will congratulate us and yourself that this dangerous affair has gone off so happily."—"Not at all!" replied my father, with grim emphasis: "I wish they had chased you to the Devil, had I myself gone too." The Count held-in for a moment, then burst forth with fury: "You shall repent this! You shall not"——'

—Father Goethe, however, has 'in the mean while quietly descended,' and sat down to sup much cheerfuller than formerly; he little caring, 'we little knowing, in what questionable way he had rolled the stone from his heart,' and how official friends must interfere, and secret negotiations enough go on, to keep him out of military prison, and worse things that might have befallen there. On all which may we be permitted once again to make the simple reflection: What a plagued and plaguing world, with its battles and bombardments, wars and rumours of war (which sow or reap no ear of corn for any man), this is! The boy, who here watches the musket-volleys and cannon-thunders of the great Fritz, shall, as man, witness the siege of Mentz; fly with Brunswick Dukes before Dumouriez and his Sansculottes, through a country champed into one red world of mud, 'like Pharaoh' (for the carriage too breaks down) 'through the Red Sea;' and finally become involved in the universal fire-consummation of Napoleon, and by skill defend himself from hurt therein!—

The father, with occasional subsidiary private tutors, is his son's schoolmaster; a somewhat pedantic pedagogue, with ambition enough and faithful goodwill, but more of

rigour than of insight ; who, however, works on a subject that he *cannot* spoil. Languages, to the number of six or seven, with whatsoever pertains to them ; histories, syllabuses, knowledges-made-easy ; not to speak of dancing, drawing, music, or, in due time, riding and fencing : all is taken-in with boundless appetite and aptitude ; all is but fuel, injudiciously piled and of wet quality, yet under which works an unquenchable Greek-fire that will feed itself therewith, that will one day make it *all* clear and glowing. The paternal grandmother, recollected as a 'pale, thin, ever white and clean-dressed figure,' provides the children many a satisfaction ; and at length, on some festive night, the crowning one of a puppet-show : whereupon ensues a long course of theatrical speculatings and practisings, somewhat as delineated, for another party, in the first book of *Meister's Apprenticeship* ; in which Work, indeed, especially in the earlier portion of it, some shadow of the author's personal experience and culture is more than once traceable. Thus Meister's desperate burnt-offering of his young 'Poems on various Occasions,' was the image of a reality which took place in Leipzig ; performed desperately enough, 'on the kitchen hearth, the thick smoke from which, flowing through the whole house, filled our good landlady with alarm.'

Old Imperial-Freetown Frankfort is not without its notabilities, tragic or comic ; in any case, impressive and didactic. The young heart is filled with boding to look into the *Judengasse* (Jew-gate), where squalid painful Hebrews are banished to scour old clothes, and in hate, and greed, and Old-Hebrew obstinacy and implacability, work out a wonderful prophetic existence, as 'a people terrible from the beginning ;' manages, however, to get admittance to their synagogue, and see a wedding and a circumcision. On its spike, aloft on one of the steeples, grins, for the last two-

hundred years, the bleached skull of a malefactor and traitor; properly, indeed, not so much a traitor, as a Radical whose Reform Bill could not be carried through. The future book-writer also, on one occasion, sees the execution of a book; how the huge printed reams rustle in the flames, are stirred-up with oven-forks, and fly half-charred aloft, the sport of winds; from which half-charred leaves, diligently picked up, he pieces himself a copy together, as did many others, and with double earnestness reads it.

As little is the old Freetown deficient in notable men; all accessible to a grandson of the Schultheiss,⁴ who besides is a youth like no other. Of which originals, curious enough, and long since 'vanished from the sale-catalogues,' take only these two specimens:

'Von Reineck, of an old-noble house; able, downright, but stiff-necked; a lean black-brown man, whom I never saw smile. The misfortune befel him that his only daughter was carried-off by a friend of the family. He prosecuted his son-in-law with the most vehement suit; and as the courts, in their formality, would neither fast enough nor with force enough obey his vengeance, he fell-out with them; and there arose quarrel on quarrel, process on process. He withdrew himself wholly into his house and the adjoining garden, lived in a spacious but melancholy under-room, where for many years no brush of a painter, perhaps scarcely the besom of a maid, had got admittance. Me he would willingly endure; had specially recommended me to his younger son. His oldest friends, who knew how to humour him, his men of business and agents he often had at table: and, on such occasions, he failed not to invite me. His board was well furnished, his buffet still better. His guests, however, had one torment, a large stove smoking out of many cracks. One of the most intimate ventured once to take notice of it, and ask the host whether he could stand such an inconvenience the whole winter. He answered, like a second Timon,

⁴ *Schultheiss* is the title of the chief magistrate in some free-towns and republics, for instance, in Berne too. It seems to derive itself from *Schuld-heissen*, and may mean the Teller of Duty, him by whom what *should* be is *right*.

and Heautontimorumenos : " Would to God this were the worst mischief of those that plague me ! " Not till late would he be persuaded to admit daughter and grandson to his sight : the son-in-law was never more to show face before him.

' On this brave and unfortunate man my presence had a kind effect ; for as he gladly spoke with me, in particular instructed me on political and state concerns, he seemed himself to feel assuaged and cheered. Accordingly, the few old friends who still kept about him, would often make use of me when they wished to soothe his indignant humour, and persuade him to any recreation. In fact he now more than once went out with us, and viewed the neighbourhood again, on which, for so many years, he had not turned an eye.' * * *

' Hofrath Huisgen, not a native of Frankfort ; of the Reformed religion, and thus incapable of public office, of advocacy among the rest, which latter, however, as a man much trusted for juristic talent, he, under another's signature, contrived quite calmly to practise, as well in Frankfort as in the Imperial Courts,—might be about sixty when I happened to have writing-lessons along with his son, and so came into the house. His figure was large ; tall without being bony, broad without corpulency. His face, deformed not only by small-pox, but wanting one of the eyes, you could not look on, for the first time, without apprehension. On his bald head he wore always a perfectly white bell-shaped cap (*Glockenmütze*) tied at top with a ribbon. His night-gowns, of calamanco or damask, were always as if new-washed. He inhabited a most cheerful suite of rooms on the ground floor in the *Allee*, and the neatness of everything about him corresponded to it. The high order of his books, papers, maps made a pleasant impression. His son, Heinrich Sebastian, who afterwards became known by various writings on Art, promised little in his youth. Good-natured but heavy, not rude yet artless, and without wish to instruct himself, he sought rather to avoid his father, as from his mother he could get whatever he wanted. I, on the other hand, came more and more into intimacy with the master the more I knew of him. As he meddled with none but important law-cases, he had time enough to amuse and occupy himself with other things. I had not long been about him, and listened to his doctrine, till I came to observe that in respect of God and the World he stood on the opposition side. One of his pet books was *Agrippa de Vanitate Scientiarum* ; this he particularly re-

commended me to read, and did therewith set my young brain, for a while, into considerable tumult. I, in the joy of my youth, was inclined to a sort of optimism, and with God or the Gods had now tolerably adjusted myself again; for, by a series of years, I had got to experience that there is many a balance against evil, that misfortunes are things one recovers from, that in dangers one finds deliverance, and does not always break his neck. On what men did and tried, moreover, I looked with tolerance, and found much praiseworthy which my old gentleman would nowise be content with. Nay, once, as he had been depicting me the world not a little on the crabbed side, I noticed in him that he meant still to finish with a trump-card. He shut, as in such cases his wont was, the blind left eye close; looked with the other broad out; and said, in a snuffling voice: "*Auch in Gott entdeck' ich Fehler.*"

Of a gentler character is the reminiscence of the maternal grandfather, old Schultheiss Textor; with his gift of prophetic dreaming, 'which endowment none of his descendants inherited;' with his kind, mild ways; there as he glides about in his garden, at evening, 'in black-velvet cap,' trimming 'the finer sort of fruit-trees,' with aid of those antique embroidered gloves or gauntlets, yearly handed him at the *Pfeiffengericht*: a soft, spirit-looking figure; the farthest outpost of the Past, which behind him melts into dim vapour. In Frau von Klettenberg, a religious associate of the mother's, we become acquainted with the *Schöne Seele* (Fair Saint) of *Meister*; she, at an after period, studied to convert her *Philo*, but only very partially succeeded. Let us notice also, as a token for good, how the young universal spirit takes pleasure in the workshops of handicraftsmen, and loves to understand their methods of labouring and of living:

'My father had early accustomed me to manage little matters for him. In particular, it was often my commission to stir-up the craftsmen he employed; who were too apt to loiter with him; as he wanted to have all accurately done, and finally for prompt payment to have

the price moderated. I came, in this way, into almost all manner of workshops; and as it lay in my nature to shape myself into the circumstances of others, to feel every species of human existence, and with satisfaction participate therein, I spent many pleasant hours in such places; grew to understand the procedure of each, and what of joy and of sorrow, advantage or drawback, the indispensable conditions of this or that way of life brought with them. * * *

The household economy of the various crafts, which took its figure and colour from the occupation of each, was also silently an object of attention; and so unfolded, so confirmed itself in me the feeling of the equality, if not of all men, yet of all men's situations; existence by itself appearing as the head condition, all the rest as indifferent and accidental.'

And so, amid manifold instructive influences, has the boy grown out of boyhood; when now a new figure enters on the scene, bringing far higher revelations:

'As at last the wine was failing, one of them called the maid; but instead of her there came a maiden of uncommon, and to see her in this environment, of incredible beauty. "What is it?" said she, after kindly giving us good-evening: "the maid is ill and gone to bed: can I serve you?"—"Our wine is done," said one; "couldst thou get us a couple of bottles over the way, it were very good of thee."—"Do it, Gretchen," said another, "it is but a cat's-leap."—"Surely!" said she; took a couple of empty bottles from the table, and hastened out. Her figure, when she turned away from you, was almost prettier than before. The little cap sat so neat on the little head, which a slim neck so gracefully united with back and shoulders. Everything about her seemed select; and you could follow the whole form more calmly, as attention was not now attracted and arrested by the true still eyes and lovely mouth alone.'

It is at the very threshold of youth that this episode of Gretchen (*Margarete, Mar-g'ret'-kin*) occurs; the young critic of slim necks and true still eyes shall now know something of natural magic, and the importance of one mortal to another; the wild-flowing bottomless sea of human Passion,

glorious in auroral light (which, alas, may become infernal lightning), unveils itself a little to him. A graceful little episode we reckon it; and Gretchen better than most first-loves: wholly an innocent, wise, dainty maiden; pure and poor,—who vanishes from us here; but, we trust, in some quiet nook of the Rhineland, became wife and mother, and was the joy and sorrow of some brave man's heart, according as it is appointed. To the boy himself it ended painfully, almost fatally, had not sickness come to his deliverance; and here too he may experience how 'a shadow chases us in all manner of sunshine,' and in this *What-d'ye-call-it* of Existence the tragic element is not wanting. The name of Gretchen, not her story, which had nothing in it of that guilt and terror, has been made world-famous in the Play of *Faust*.—

Leipzig University has the honour of matriculating him. The name of his 'propitious mother' she may boast of, but not of the reality: alas, in these days, the University of the Universe is the only propitious mother of such; all other propitious mothers are but unpropitious superannuated dry-nurses fallen bedrid, from whom the famished nursling has to *steal* even bread and water, if he will not die; whom for most part he soon takes leave of, giving perhaps (as in Gibbon's case), for farewell thanks, some rough tweak of the nose; and rushes desperate into the wide world an orphan. The time is advancing, slower or faster, when the bedrid dry-nurse will de cease, and be succeeded by a walking and stirring wet one. Goethe's employments and culture at Leipzig lay in quite other groves than the academic: he listened to the Ciceronian Ernesti with eagerness, but the life-giving word flowed not from his mouth; to the sacerdotal, eclectic-sentimental Gellert (the divinity of all tea-table moral-philosophers of both sexes); witnessed 'the pure

‘soul, the genuine will of the noble man,’ heard ‘his admonitions, warnings and entreaties, uttered in a somewhat hollow and melancholy tone;’ and then the Frenchman say to it all, “*Laissez le faire; il nous forme des dupes.*” ‘In logic it seemed to me very strange that I must now take-up those spiritual operations which from of old I had executed with the utmost convenience, and tatter them asunder, insulate and as if destroy them, that their right employment might become plain to me. Of the Thing, of the World, of God, I fancied I knew almost about as much as the Doctor himself; and he seemed to me, in more than one place, to hobble dreadfully (*gewaltig zu hapern*).’

However, he studies to some profit with the Painter Oeser; hears, one day, at the door, with horror, that there is no lesson, for news of Winkelmann’s assassination have come. With the ancient Gottsched, too, he has an interview: alas, it is a young Zeus come to dethrone old Saturn, whose time in the literary heaven is nigh run; for on Olympus itself, one Demiurgus passeth away and another cometh. Gottsched had introduced the reign of *water*, in all shapes liquid and solid, and long gloriously presided over the same; but now there is enough of it, and the ‘rayless majesty’ (had he been prophetic) here beheld the rayed one, before whom he was to melt away:

‘We announced ourselves. The servant led us into a large room, and said his master would come immediately. Whether we misinterpreted a motion he made I cannot say; at any rate, we fancied he had beckoned us to advance into an adjoining chamber. We did advance, and to a singular scene; for, at the same moment, Gottsched, the huge broad gigantic man, entered from the opposite door, in green damask nightgown, lined with red taffeta; but his enormous head was bald and without covering. This, however, was the very want to be now supplied: for the servant came springing-in at the side-door, with a full-bottomed wig on his hand (the locks fell down to his elbow), and

held it out, with terrified gesture, to his master. Gottsched, without uttering the smallest complaint, lifted the head-gear with his left hand from the servant's arm; and very deftly swinging it up to its place on the head, at the same time, with his right hand, gave the poor man a box on the ear, which, as is seen in comedies, dashed him spinning out of the apartment; whereupon the respectable-looking Patriarch quite gravely desired us to be seated, and with proper dignity went through a tolerably long discourse.'

In which discourse, however, it is likely, little edification for the young inquirer could lie. Already by multifarious discoursings and readings he has convinced himself, to his despair, of the watery condition of the Gottschedic world, and how 'the *Noachide* (Noaheid) of Bodmer is a true symbol 'of the deluge that has swelled-up round the German Par-nassus,' and in literature as in philosophy there is neither landmark nor loadstar. Here, too, he resumes his inquiries about religion, falls into 'black scruples' about most things; and in 'the bald and feeble deliverances' propounded him has sorry comfort. Outward things, moreover, go not as they should: the copious philosophic harlequinades of that wag, Beyrish 'with a long nose,' unsettle rather than settle; as do, in many ways, other wise and foolish mortals of both sexes: matters grow worse and worse. He falls sick, becomes wretched enough; yet unfolds withal 'an audacious 'humour which feels itself superior to the moment, not only 'fears no danger, but even wilfully courts it.' And thus, somewhat in a wrecked state, he quits his propitious mother, and returns home.

Nevertheless let there be no reflections: he must now in earnest get forward with his Law, and on to Strasburg to complete himself therein; so has the paternal judgment arranged it. A Lawyer, the thing in these latter days called Lawyer, of a man in whom ever-bounteous Nature has sent

us a Poet for the World! O blind mortals, blind over what lies closest to us, what we have the truest wish to see! In this young colt that caprioles there in young lustihood, and snuffs the wind with an 'audacious humour,' rather dangerous-looking, no Sleswic Dobbin, to rise to dromedary stature, and draw three tons avoirdupois (of street-mud or whatever else), has been vouchsafed; but a winged miraculous Pegasus to carry us to the heavens!—Whereon too (if we consider it) many a heroic Bellerophon shall, in times coming, mount, and destroy Chimæras, and deliver afflicted nations on the lower earth.

Meanwhile, be this as it may, the youth is gone to Strasburg to prepare for the *examen rigorosum*; though, as it turned out, for quite a different than the Law one. Confusion enough is in his head and heart; poetic objects too have taken root there, and will not rest till they have worked themselves into form. 'These,' says he, 'were Götz von Berlichingen and Faust. The written Life of the former had seized my inmost soul. The figure of a rude well-meaning self-helper, in wild anarchic time, excited my deepest sympathy. The impressive puppet-show Fable of the other sounded and hummed through me many-toned enough.'—'Let us withdraw, however,' subjoins he, 'into the free air, to the high broad platform of the Minster; as if the time were still here, when we young ones often rendezvoused thither to salute, with full rummers, the sinking sun.' They had good telescopes with them; 'and one friend after another searched out the spot in the distance which had become the dearest to him; neither was I without a little eye-mark of the like, which, though it rose not conspicuous in the landscape, drew me to it beyond all else with a kindly magic.' This alludes, we perceive, to that Alsatian Vicar of Wakefield, and his daughter the fair

Frederike; concerning which matter a word may not be useless here. Exception has been taken by certain tender souls, of the all-for-love sort, against Goethe's conduct in that business. He flirted with his blooming blue-eyed Alsatian, she with him, innocently enough, thoughtlessly enough, till they both came to love each other; and then, when the marrying point began to grow visible in the distance, he stopt short and would no farther. Adieu, he cried, and waved his lily hand. 'The good Frederike was weeping; I too was sick enough at heart.' Whereupon arises the question: Is Goethe a bad man; or is he not a bad man? Alas, worthy souls! if this world were all a wedding dance, and *Thou-shalt* never came into collision with *Thou-wilt*, what a new improved time had we of it! But it is man's miserable lot, in the mean while, to eat and labour as well as wed; alas, how often, like Corporal Trim, does he spend the whole night, one moment dividing the world into two halves with his fair Beguine, next moment remembering that he has only a knapsack and fifteen florins to divide with any one! Besides, you do not consider that our dear Frederike, whom we too could weep for if it served, had a sound German heart within her stays; had furthermore abundance of *work* to do, and not even leisure to die of love; above all, that at this period, in the country parts of Alsatia, there were no circulating-library novels.

With regard to the false one's cruelty of temper, who, if we remember, saw a ghost in broad noon that day he rode away from her, let us, on the other hand, hear Jung Stilling, for he also had experience thereof at this very date. Poor Jung, a sort of German Dominie Sampson, awkward, honest, irascible, 'in old-fashioned clothes and bag-wig,' who had been several things, charcoal-burner, and, in repeated alternation, tailor and schoolmaster, was now come to Stras-

burg to study medicine; with purse long-necked, yet with head that had brains in it, and heart full of trust in God. A pious soul, who if he did afterwards write books on the Nature of Departed Spirits, also restored to sight (by his skill in eye-operations) above *two thousand poor blind persons*, without fee or reward, even supporting many of them in the hospital at his own expense.

'There dined,' says he, 'at this table about twenty people, whom the two comrades' (Troost and I) 'saw one after the other enter. One especially, with large bright eyes, magnificent brow, and fine stature, walked gallantly (*muthig*) in. He drew Herr Troost's and Stilling's eyes on him; Herr Troost said, "That must be a superior man." Stilling assented, yet thought they would both have much vexation from him, as he looked like one of your wild fellows. This did Stilling infer from the frank style which the student had assumed; but here he was far mistaken. They found, meanwhile, that this distinguished individual was named Herr Goethe.

'Herr Troost whispered to Stilling, "Here it were best one sat seven days silent." Stilling felt this truth; they sat silent therefore, and no one particularly minded them, except that Goethe now and then hurled over (*herüberwälzte*) a look: he sat opposite Stilling, and had the government of the table without aiming at it.

'Herr Troost was neat, and dressed in the fashion; Stilling likewise tolerably so. He had a dark-brown coat with fustian undergarments: only that a scratch-wig also remained to him, which, among his bag-wigs, he would wear out. This he had put on one day, and came therewith to dinner. Nobody took notice of it except Herr Waldberg of Vienna. That gentleman looked at him; and as he had already heard that Stilling was greatly taken up about religion, he began, and asked him, Whether he thought Adam in Paradise had worn a scratch-wig? All laughed heartily, except Salzman, Goethe and Troost; these did not laugh. In Stilling wrath rose and burnt, and he answered: "Be ashamed of this jest; such a trivial thing is not worth laughing at!" But Goethe struck-in and added: "Try a man first whether he deserves mockery. It is devil-like to fall upon an honest-hearted person who has injured nobody, and make sport of

him!" From that time Herr Goethe took up Stilling, visited him, liked him, made friendship and brothership with him, and strove by all opportunities to do him kindness. Pity that so few are acquainted with this noble man in respect of his heart!⁵

Here, indeed, may be the place to mention, that this noble man, in respect of his heart, and goodness and badness, is not altogether easy to get acquainted with; that innumerable persons, of the man-milliner, parish-clerk and circulating-library sort, will find him a hard nut to crack. Hear in what questionable manner, so early as the year 1773, he expresses himself towards Herr Sulzer, whose beautiful hypothesis, that 'Nature meant, by the constant influx of satisfactions streaming-in upon us, to fashion our minds, on the whole, to softness and sensibility,' he will not leave a leg to stand on. '*On the whole,*' says he, 'she does no such thing; she rather, God be thanked, hardens her genuine children against the pains and evils she incessantly prepares for them; so that we name him the happiest man who is the strongest to make front against evil, to put it aside from him, and in defiance of it go the road of his own will.' 'Man's art in all situations is to fortify himself against Nature, to avoid her thousandfold ills, and only to enjoy his measure of the good; till at length he manages to include the whole circulation of his true and factitious wants in a palace, and fix as far as possible all scattered beauty and felicity within his glass walls, where accordingly he grows ever the weaker, takes to "joys of the soul," and his powers, roused to their natural exertion by no contradiction, melt away into'—*horresco referens*—'Virtue, Benevolence, Sensibility!' In Goethe's Writings too, we all know, the moral lesson is seldom so easily educed as one would wish. Alas, how seldom is he so direct in

⁵ *Stillings Wanderschaft.* Berlin and Leipzig, 1778.

tendency as his own plain-spoken moralist at Plundersweilern :

‘ Dear Christian people, one and all,
When will you cease your sinning ?
Else can your comfort be but small,
Good hap scarce have beginning :
For Vice is hurtful unto man,
In Virtue lies his surest plan ;’

or, to give it in the original words, the emphasis of which no foreign idiom can imitate :

‘ *Die Tugend ist das höchste Gut,
Das Laster Weh dem Menschen thut !*

In which emphatic couplet, does there not, as the critics say in other cases, lie the essence of whole volumes, such as we have read ?—

Goethe's far most important relation in Strasburg was the accidental temporary one with Herder ; which issued, indeed, in a more permanent, though at no time an altogether intimate one. Herder, with much to give, had always something to require ; living with him seems never to have been wholly a sinecure. Goethe and he moreover were fundamentally different, not to say discordant ; neither could the humour of the latter be peculiarly sweetened by his actual business in Strasburg, that of undergoing a surgical operation on ‘ the lachrymatory duct,’ and, above all, an unsuccessful one :

‘ He was attending the Prince of Holstein-Eutin, who laboured under mental distresses, on a course of travel ; and had arrived with him at Strasburg. Our society, so soon as his presence there was known, felt a strong wish to get near him ; which happiness, quite unexpectedly and by chance, befel me first. I had gone to the *Inn zum Geist*, visiting I forget what stranger of rank. Just at the bottom of the stairs I came upon a man, like myself about to ascend, whom

by his look I could take to be a clergyman. His powdered hair was fastened-up into a round lock, the black coat also distinguished him ; still more a long black-silk mantle, the end of which he had gathered together and stuck into his pocket. This in some measure surprising, yet on the whole gallant and pleasing figure, of whom I had already heard speak, left me no doubt but it was the famed Traveller ; and my address soon convinced him that he was known to me. He asked my name, which could not be of any significance to him ; however, my openness seemed to give pleasure, for he replied to it in friendly style, and as we stepped up stairs, forthwith showed himself ready for a lively communication. Our visit also was to the same party ; and before separating I begged permission to wait upon himself, which he kindly enough accorded me. I delayed not to make repeated use of this preferment ; and was the longer the more attracted towards him. He had something softish in his manner, which was fit and dignified, without strictly being bred. A round face ; a fine brow ; a somewhat short blunt nose ; a somewhat projected, yet highly characteristic, pleasant, amiable mouth. Under black eyebrows, a pair of coal-black eyes, which failed not of their effect, though one of them was wont to be red and inflamed.'

With this gifted man, by five years his senior, whose writings had already given him a name, and announced the much that lay in him, the open-hearted disciple could manifoldly communicate, learning and enduring. Erelong, under that 'softish manner,' there disclosed itself a 'counterpulse' of causticity, of ungente almost noisy banter ; the blunt nose was too often curled in an adunco-suspensive manner. Whatsoever of self-complacency, of acquired attachment and insight, of self-sufficiency well or ill grounded, lay in the youth, was exposed, we can fancy, to the severest trial. In Herder too, as in an expressive microcosm, he might see imaged the whole wild world of German literature, of European Thought ; its old workings and misworkings, its best recent tendencies and efforts ; what its past and actual wasteness, perplexity, confusion worse confounded, was. In

all which, moreover, the bantered, yet imperturbably inquiring brave young man had quite other than a theoretic interest, being himself minded to dwell there. It is easy to conceive that Herder's presence, stirring-up in that fashion so many new and old matters, would mightily aggravate the former 'fermentation;' and thereby, it is true, unintentionally or not, forward the same towards clearness.

In fact, with the hastiest glance over the then position of the world spiritual, we shall find that as Disorder is never wanting (and for the young spiritual hero, who is there only to destroy Disorder and make it Order, can least of all be wanting), so, at the present juncture, it specially abounded. Why dwell on this often-delineated Epoch? Over all Europe the reign of Earnestness had now wholly dwindled into that of Dilettantism. The voice of a certain modern 'closet-logic,' which called itself, and could not but call itself, Philosophy, had gone forth, saying, Let there be darkness, and there was darkness. No Divinity any longer dwelt in the world; and as men cannot do without a Divinity, a sort of terrestrial-upholstery one had been got together, and named TASTE, with medallie virtuosi and picture cognoscenti, and enlightened letter and belles-lettres men enough for priests. To which worship, with its stunted formularies and hungry results, must the earnest mind, like the hollow and shallow one, adjust itself, as best might be. To a new man, no doubt, the Earth is always new, never wholly without interest. Knowledge, were it only that of dead languages, or of dead actions, the foreign tradition of what others had acquired and done, was still to be searched after; fame might be enjoyed if procurable; above all, the culinary and brewing arts remained in pristine completeness, their results could be relished with pristine vigour. Life lumbered along, better or worse, in pitiful discontent,

not yet in decisive desperation, as through a dim day of languor, sultry and sunless. Already, too, on the horizon might be seen clouds, might be heard murmurs, which by and by proved themselves of an electric character, and were to cool and clear that same sultriness in wondrous deluges.

To a man standing in the midst of German literature, and looking out thither for his highest good, the view was troubled perhaps with various peculiar perplexities. For two centuries, German literature had lain in the sere leaf. The Luther, 'whose words were half battles,' and such half battles as could shake and overset half Europe with their cannonading, had long since gone to sleep; and all other words were but the miserable bickering of theological camp-sutlers in quarrel over the stripping of the slain. Ulrich Hutten slept silent, in the little island of the Zurich Lake; the weary and heavy-laden had wiped the sweat from his brow, and laid him down to rest there: the valiant, fire-tempered heart, with all its woes and loves and loving indignations, mouldered, cold, forgotten; with such a pulse no new heart rose to beat. The tamer Opitzes and Flemmings of a succeeding era had, in like manner, long fallen obsolete. One unhappy generation after another of pedants, 'rhizophagous,' living on roots, Greek or Hebrew; of farce-writers, gallant-verse writers, journalists and other jugglers of nondescript sort, wandered in nomadic wise, whither provender was to be had; among whom, if a passionate Gunther go with some emphasis to ruin; if an illuminated Thomasius, earlier than the general herd, deny witchcraft, we are to esteem it a felicity. This too, however, has passed; and now, in manifold enigmatical signs, a new Time announces itself. Well-born Hagedorns, munificent Gleims have again rendered the character of Author honourable; the polish of correct, assiduous Rabeners and Ramlers have smoothed away the

old impurities; a pious Klopstock, to the general enthusiasm, rises anew into something of seraphic music, though by methods wherein he can have no follower; the brave spirit of a Lessing pierces, in many a life-giving ray, through the dark inertness: Germany has risen to a level with Europe, is henceforth participant of all European influences; nay it is now appointed, though not yet ascertained, that Germany is to be the leader of spiritual Europe. A deep movement agitates the universal mind of Germany, though as yet no one sees towards what issue; only that heavings and eddyings, confused conflicting tendencies, work unquietly everywhere; the movement is begun and will not stop, but the course of it is yet far from ascertained. Even to the young man now looking-on with such anxious intensity had this very task been allotted: To find it a course, and set it flowing thereon.

Whoever will represent this confused revolutionary condition of all things, has but to fancy how it would act on the most susceptible and comprehensive of living minds; what a Chaos he had taken in, and was dimly struggling to body-forth into a Creation. Add to which, his so confused, contradictory personal condition; appointed by a positive father to be practitioner of Law, by a still more positive mother (old Nature herself) to be practitioner of Wisdom, and Captain of spiritual Europe: we have confusion enough for him, doubts economic and doubts theologic, doubts moral and æsthetical, a whole world of confusion and doubt.

Nevertheless to the young Strasburg student the gods had given their most precious gift, which is worth all others, without which all others are worth nothing; a seeing eye and a faithful loving heart:

*‘Er hatt’ ein Auge treu und klug,
Und war auch liebevoll genug,*

*Zu schauen manches klar und rein,
 Und wieder alles zu machen sein ;
 Hatt' auch eine Zunge die sich ergoss,
 Und leicht und fein in Worte floss ;
 Dess thaten die Musen sich erfreun,
 Wollten ihn zum Meistersänger weihn.¹⁶*

A mind of all-piercing vision, of sunny strength, not made to ray-out darker darkness, but to bring warm sunlight, all-purifying, all-uniting. A clear, invincible mind, and 'consecrated to be Master-singer' in quite another guild than that Nürnberg one.

His first literary productions fall in his twenty-third year; *Werter*, the most celebrated of these, in his twenty-fifth. Of which wonderful Book, and its now recognised character as poetic (and prophetic) utterance of the World's Despair, it is needless to repeat what has elsewhere been written. This and *Götz von Berlichingen*, which also, as a poetic looking-back into the past, was a word for the world, have produced incalculable effects;—which now indeed, however some departing echo of them may linger in the wrecks of our own Mosstrooper and Satanic Schools, do at length all happily lie behind us. Some trifling incidents at Wetzlar, and the suicide of an unhappy acquaintance, were the means of 'crystallising' that wondrous perilous stuff, which the young heart oppressively held dissolved in it, into this world-famous, and as it proved world-medicative *Werter*. He had gone to Wetzlar with an eye still to Law; which now, however, was abandoned, never to be resumed. Thus did he too, 'like Saul the son of Kish, go out to seek his father's asses, and instead thereof find a kingdom.'

¹⁶ *Hans Sachsens Poetische Sendung* (*Goethes Werke*, xiii.); a beautiful piece (a very *Hans Sachs* beatified, both in character and style), which we wish there was any possibility of translating.

With the completion of these two Works (a completion in every sense, for they were not only emitted, but speedily also demitted, and seen over, and left behind), commences what we can specially call his Life, his activity as Man. The outward particulars of it, from this point where his own Narrative ends, have been briefly summed-up in these terms :

‘In 1776, the Heir-apparent of Weimar was passing through Frankfort, on which occasion, by the intervention of some friends, he waited upon Goethe. The visit must have been mutually agreeable ; for a short time afterwards the young author was invited to court ; apparently to contribute his assistance in various literary institutions and arrangements then proceeding or contemplated ; and in pursuance of this honourable call, he accordingly settled at Weimar, with the title of *Legationsrath*, and the actual dignity of a place in the *Collegium*, or Council. The connexion begun under such favourable auspices, and ever afterwards continued under the like or better, has been productive of important consequences, not only to Weimar but to all Germany. The noble purpose undertaken by the Duchess Amelia was zealously forwarded by the young Duke on his accession ; under whose influence, supported and directed by his new Councillor, this inconsiderable state has gained for itself a fairer distinction than any of its larger, richer or more warlike neighbours. By degrees whatever was brightest in the genius of Germany had been gathered to this little court ; a classical theatre was under the superintendence of Goethe and Schiller ; here Wieland taught and sung ; in the pulpit was Herder ; and possessing such a four, the small town of Weimar, some five-and-twenty years ago, might challenge the proudest capital of the world to match it in intellectual wealth. Occupied so profitably to his country, and honourably to himself, Goethe continued rising in favour with his Prince ; by degrees a political was added to his literary trust ; in 1779 he became Privy Councillor ; President in 1782 ; and at length after his return from Italy, where he had spent two years in varied studies and observation, he was appointed Minister ; a post which he only a few years ago resigned, on his final retirement from public affairs.’

Notable enough that little Weimar should, in this particular, have brought back, as it were, an old Italian Commonwealth into the nineteenth century! For the Petrarcas and Boccaccios, though revered as Poets, were not supposed to have lost their wits as men; but could be employed in the highest services of the state, not only as fit, but as the fittest, to discharge these. Very different with us, where Diplomats and Governors can be picked up from the highways, or chosen in the manner of blindman's buff (the first figure you clutch, say rather that clutches *you*, will make a governor); and, even in extraordinary times, it is thought much if a Milton can become Latin Clerk under some Bulstrode Whitelock, and be called 'one Mr. Milton.' As if the poet, with his poetry, were no other than a pleasant mountebank, with faculty of a certain ground-and-lofty tumbling which would amuse; for which you must throw him a few coins, a little flattery, otherwise he would not amuse you with it. As if there were any talent whatsoever; above all, as if there were any talent of Poetry (by the consent of all ages the highest talent, and sometimes pricelessly high), the first foundation of which were not even these two things (properly but one thing): intellectual Perspicacity, with force and honesty of Will. Which two, do they not, in their simplest quite naked form, constitute the very equipment a Man of Business needs; the very implements whereby *all* business, from that of the delver and ditcher to that of the legislator and imperator, is accomplished; as in their noblest concentration they are still the moving faculty of the Artist and Prophet!

To Goethe himself this connexion with Weimar opened the happiest course of life which, probably, the age he lived in could have yielded him. Moderation, yet abundance; elegance without luxury or sumptuosity: Art enough to give a

heavenly firmament to his existence; Business enough to give it a solid earth. In his multifarious duties he comes in contact with all manner of men; gains experience and tolerance of all men's ways. A faculty like his, which could master the highest spiritual problems and conquer Evil Spirits in their own domain, was not likely to be foiled by such when they put-on the simpler shape of material clay. The greatest of Poets is also the skilfulest of Managers: the little terrestrial Weimar trust committed to him prospers; and one sees with a sort of smile, in which may lie a deep seriousness, how the Jena Museums, University arrangements, Weimar Art-exhibitions and Palace-buildings, are guided smoothly on, by a hand which could have worthily swayed imperial sceptres. The world, could it intrust its imperial sceptres to such hands, were blessed: nay to this man, without the world's consent given or asked, a still higher function *had* been committed. But on the whole, we name his external life happy, among the happiest, in this, that a noble princely Courtesy could dwell in it, based on the worship, by speech and practice, of Truth only (for his victory, as we said above, was so complete, as almost to hide that there had been a struggle), and the worldly could praise him as the most agreeable of men, and the spiritual as the highest and clearest; but happy above all, in this, that it forwarded him, as no other could have done, in his inward life, the good or evil hap of which was alone of permanent importance.

The inward life of Goethe, onward from this epoch, lies nobly recorded in the long series of his Writings. Of these, meanwhile, the great bulk of our English world has nowise yet got to such understanding and mastery, that we could, with much hope of profit, go into a critical examination of their merits and characteristics. Such a task can stand-over

till the day for it arrive; be it in this generation, or the next, or after the next. What has been elsewhere already set forth suffices the present want, or needs only to be repeated and enforced; the expositor of German things must say, with judicious Zanga in the play: "First recover that, then shalt thou know more." A glance over the grand outlines of the matter, and more especially under the aspect suitable to these days, can alone be in place here.

In *Goethe's Works*, chronologically arranged, we see this above all things: A mind working itself into clearer and clearer freedom; gaining a more and more perfect dominion of its world. The pestilential fever of Scepticism runs through its stages; but happily it ends and disappears at the last stage, not in death, not in chronic malady (the commonest way), but in clearer, henceforth invulnerable health. *Werter* we called the voice of the world's despair: passionate, uncontrollable is this voice; not yet melodious and supreme, —as nevertheless we at length hear it in the wild apocalyptic *Faust*: like a death-song of departing worlds; no voice of joyful 'morning stars singing together' over a Creation; but of red nigh-extinguished midnight stars, in spherulic swan-melody, proclaiming, It is ended!

What follows, in the next period, we might, for want of a fitter term, call Pagan or Ethnic in character; meaning thereby an anthropomorphic character, akin to that of old Greece and Rome. *Wilhelm Meister* is of that stamp: warm, hearty, sunny human Endeavour; a free recognition of Life, in its depth, variety and majesty; as yet no Divinity recognised there. The famed *Venetian Epigrams* are of the like Old Ethnic tone: musical, joyfully strong; true, yet not the whole truth, and sometimes in their blunt realism jarring on the sense. As in this, oftener cited perhaps, by a certain class of wise men, than the due proportion demanded:

Why so bustleth the People and crieth?—Would find itself victual,
 Children too would beget, feed on the best may be had !
 Mark in thy notebooks, Traveller, this, and at home go do likewise :
 Farther reacheth no man, make he what stretching he will.

Doubt, reduced into Denial, now lies prostrate under foot: the fire has done its work, an old world is in ashes; but the smoke and the flame are blown away, and a sun again shines clear over the ruin, to raise therefrom a new nobler verdure and flowerage. Till at length, in the third or final period, melodious Reverence becomes triumphant; a deep all-pervading Faith, with mild voice, grave as gay, speaks forth to us in a *Meisters Wanderjahre*, in a *West-Östlicher Divan*; in many a little *Zahme Xenie*, and true-hearted little rhyme, 'which,' it has been said, 'for pregnancy and 'genial significance, except in the Hebrew Scriptures, you 'will nowhere match.' As here, striking-in almost at a venture :

Like as a Star,
 That maketh not haste,
 That taketh not rest,
 Be each one fulfilling
 His god-given Hest.⁷

⁷ *Wie das Gestirn,
 Ohne Hast,
 Aber ohne Rast,
 Drehe sich jeder
 Um die eigne Last.*

So stands it in the original ; hereby, however, hangs a tale :

'A fact,' says one of our fellow-labourers in this German vineyard, 'has but 'now come to our knowledge, which we take pleasure and pride in stating. Fifteen 'Englishmen, entertaining that high consideration for the good Goethe, which the 'labours and high deserts of a long life usefully employed so richly merit from all 'mankind, have presented him with a highly-wrought Seal, as a token of their 'veneration.' We must pass over the description of the gift, for it would be too elaborate; suffice it to say, that amid tasteful carving and emblematic embossing enough, stood these words engraven on a gold belt, on the four sides respectively : *To the German Master : From Friends in England : 28th August : 1831 ; finally,*

Or this small Couplet, which the reader, if he will, may substitute for whole horse-loads of *Essays on the Origin of Evil*; a spiritual manufacture which, in these enlightened times, ought ere now to have gone out of fashion :

“What shall I teach thee, the foremost thing?”
 Couldst teach me off my own Shadow to spring!

Or the pathetic picturesqueness of this :

A rampart-breach is every Day,
 Which many mortals are storming :
 Fall in the gap who may,
 Of the slain no heap is forming.

*Eine Bresche ist jeder Tag,
 Die viele Menschen erstürmen ;
 Wer da auch fallen mag,
 Die Todten sich niemals thürmen.*

In such spirit, and with an eye that takes-in all provinces of human Thought, Feeling and Activity, does the Poet

that the impression was a star encircled with a serpent-of-eternity, and this motto :
Ohne Hast Aber Ohne Rast.

‘The following is the Letter which accompanied it :

‘“*To the Poet Goethe, on the 28th of August 1831.*

‘“Sir,—Among the friends whom this so interesting Anniversary calls round you, may we ‘English friends,’ in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present ourselves to offer you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honour to accept this little Birthday Gift, which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value.

‘“We said to ourselves : As it is always the highest duty and pleasure to show reverence to whom reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor is he who by act and word instructs us in wisdom,—so we, undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually taught towards their spiritual teacher, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common ; for which end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift, proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching birthday ; that so, while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting.

‘“And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer

stand forth as the true prophet of his time; victorious over its contradiction, possessor of its wealth; embodying the nobleness of the past into a new whole, into a new vital nobleness for the present and the future. Antique nobleness in all kinds, yet worn with new clearness; the spirit of it is preserved and again revealed in shape, when the former shape and vesture had become old (as vestures do), and was dead and cast forth; and we mourned as if the spirit too were gone. This, we are aware, is a high saying; applicable to no other man living, or that has lived for some two centuries; ranks Goethe, not only as the highest man of his time, but as a man of universal Time, important for all generations,—one of the landmarks in the History of Men.

‘to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties!’

“We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious, that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to complete your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, like a star, without haste, yet without rest.

“We remain, Sir, your friends and servants,

“FIFTEEN ENGLISHMEN.”

‘The wonderful old man, to whom distant and unknown friends had paid such homage, could not but be moved at sentiments expressed in such terms. We hear that he values the token highly, and has condescended to return the following lines for answer:

“DEN FUNFZEHN ENGLISCHEN FREUNDEN.

*Worte, die der Dichter spricht,
Treu, in heimischen Bezirken
Wirken gleich, doch weiss er nicht
Ob sie in die Ferne wirken.*

*Britten! habt sie aufgefasst:
‘Thätigen Sinn, das Thun gezügelt;
Stetig Streben ohne Hast;’
Und so wollt Ihr denn besiegelt!*

“Weimar, d. 28ten August 1831.

GOETHE.”

(*Fraser's Magazine*, xxii. 447.)

And thus, as it chanced, was the poet's last birthday celebrated by an outward ceremony of a peculiar kind; wherein too, it is to be hoped, might lie some inward meaning and sincerity.

Thus, from our point of view, does Goethe rise on us as the Uniter, and victorious Reconciler, of the distracted, clashing elements of the most distracted and divided age that the world has witnessed since the Introduction of the Christian Religion; to which old chaotic Era, of world-confusion and world-refusion, of blackest darkness, succeeded by a dawn of light and nobler 'dayspring from on high,' this wondrous Era of ours is, indeed, oftenest likened. To the faithful heart let no era be a desperate one! It is ever the nature of Darkness to be followed by a new nobler Light; nay to produce such. The woes and contradictions of an Atheistic time; of a world sunk in wickedness and baseness and unbelief, wherein also physical wretchedness, the disorganisation and broken-heartedness of whole classes struggling in ignorance and pain will not fail: all this, the view of all this, falls like a Sphinx-question on every new-born earnest heart, a life-and-death entanglement for every earnest heart to deliver itself from, and the world from. Of Wisdom cometh Strength: only when there is 'no vision' do the people perish. But, by natural vicissitude, the age of *Persiflage* goes out, and that of earnest unconquerable Endeavour must come in: for the ashes of the old fire will not warm men anew; the new generation is too desolate to indulge in mockery,—unless, perhaps, in bitter suicidal mockery of itself! Thus after Voltaires enough have laughed and sniffed at what is false, appear some Turgots to ask what is true. Woe to the land where, in these seasons, no prophet arises; but only censors, satirists and embittered desperadoes, to make the evil worse; at best but to accelerate a consummation, which in accelerating they have aggravated! Old Europe had its Tacitus and Juvenal; but these availed not. New Europe too has had its Mirabeaus, and Byrons, and Napoleons, and innumerable red-flaming meteors, shaking pestilence from their hair;

and earthquakes and deluges, and Chaos come again; but the clear Star, day's harbinger (*Phosphoros*, the bringer of *light*), had not yet been recognised.

That in Goethe there lay Force to educe reconciliation out of such contradiction as man is now born into, marks him as the Strong One of his time; the true *Earl*, though now with quite other weapons than those old steel *Jarls* were used to! Such reconciliation of contradictions, indeed, is the task of every man: the weakest reconciles somewhat; reduces old chaotic elements into new higher order; ever, according to faculty and endeavour, brings good out of evil. Consider now what faculty and endeavour must belong to the highest of such tasks, which virtually includes all others whatsoever! The thing that was given this man to reconcile (to begin reconciling and teach us how to reconcile), was the inward spiritual chaos; the centre of all other confusions, outward and inward: he was to close the Abyss out of which such manifold destruction, moral, intellectual, social, was proceeding.

The greatness of his Endowment, manifested in such a work, has long been plain to all men. That it belongs to the highest class of human endowments, entitling the wearer thereof, who so nobly used it, to the appellation, in its strictest sense, of Great Man,—is also becoming plain. A giant strength of Character is to be traced here; mild and kindly and calm, even as strength ever is. In the midst of so much spasmodic Byronism, bellowing till its windpipe is cracked, how very different looks *this* symptom of strength: 'He appeared to aim at pushing away from him everything that did not hang upon his individual will.' 'In his own imperturbable firmness of character, he had grown into the habit of never contradicting any one. On the contrary, he

‘listened with a friendly air to every one’s opinion, and
 ‘would himself elucidate and strengthen it by instances and
 ‘reasons of his own. All who did not know him fancied
 ‘that he thought as they did; for he was possessed of a
 ‘preponderating intellect, and could transport himself into
 ‘the mental state of any man, and imitate his manner of
 ‘conceiving.’⁸ Beloved brethren, who wish to be strong!
 Had not the man, who could take this smooth method of it,
 more strength in him than any teeth-grinding, glass-eyed
 ‘lone Caloyer’ you have yet fallen-in with? Consider your
 ways; consider, first, whether you cannot do with being
weak! If the answer still prove negative, consider, secondly,
 what strength actually is, and where you are to try for it.
 A certain strong man, of former time, fought stoutly at Lepanto;
 worked stoutly as Algerine slave; stoutly delivered
 himself from such working; with stout cheerfulness endured
 famine and nakedness and the world’s ingratitude; and, sitting
 in jail, with the one arm left him, wrote our joyfulest,
 and all but our deepest, modern book, and named it *Don Quixote*:
 this was a genuine strong man. A strong man, of recent time,
 fights little for any good cause anywhere; works weakly
 as an English lord; weakly delivers himself from such working;
 with weak despondency endures the cackling of plucked geese
 at St. James’s; and, sitting in sunny Italy, in his coach-and-four,
 at a distance of two thousand miles from them, writes, over many
 reams of paper, the following sentence, with variations: *Saw ever the world one greater or unhappier?* This was a sham strong man. Choose ye.—

Of Goethe’s spiritual Endowment, looked at on the Intellectual side,
 we have (as indeed lies in the nature of things, for moral and intellectual
 are fundamentally one and the same) to pronounce a similar opinion;
 that it is great among

⁸ *Wilhelm Meister*, book vi.

the very greatest. As the first gift of all, may be discerned here utmost Clearness, all-piercing faculty of Vision ; where-to, as we ever find it, all other gifts are superadded ; nay, properly they are but other forms of the same gift. A nobler power of insight than this of Goethe you in vain look for, since Shakspeare passed away. In fact, there is much every way, here in particular, that these two minds have in common. Shakspeare too does not look *at* a thing, but into it, through it ; so that he constructively comprehends it, can take it asunder, and put it together again ; the thing melts, as it were, into light under his eye, and anew *creates* itself before him. That is to say, he is a Thinker in the highest of all senses : he is a Poet. For Goethe, as for Shakspeare, the world lies all translucent, all *fusible* we might call it, encircled with WONDER ; the Natural in reality the Supernatural, for to the seer's eyes both become one. What are the *Hamlets* and *Tempests*, the *Fausts* and *Mignons*, but glimpses accorded us into this translucent, wonder-encircled world ; revelations of the mystery of all mysteries, Man's Life as it actually is ?

Under other secondary aspects the poetical faculty of the two will still be found cognate. Goethe is full of *figurativeness* ; this grand light-giving Intellect, as all such are, is an imaginative one,—and in a quite other sense than most of our unhappy Imaginatives will imagine. Gall the Cranio-logist declared him to be a born *Volksredner* (popular orator), both by the figure of his brow, and what was still more decisive, because ‘he could not speak but a figure came.’ Gall saw what was high as his own nose reached,

High as the nose doth reach, all clear !

What higher lies, they ask : Is it here ?

A far different figurativeness was this of Goethe than popular oratory has work for. In figures of the popular-

oratory kind, Goethe, throughout his Writings at least, is nowise the most copious man known to us, though on a stricter scrutiny we may find him the richest. Of your ready-made, coloured-paper metaphors, such as can be sewed or plastered on the surface, by way of giving an ornamental finish to the rag-web already woven, we speak not; there is not one such to be discovered in all his Works. But even in the use of genuine metaphors, which are not haberdashery ornament, but the genuine new vesture of new thoughts, he yields to lower men (for example to Jean Paul); that is to say, in fact, he is more master of the *common* language, and can oftener make *it* serve him. Goethe's figurativeness lies in the very centre of his being; manifests itself as the constructing of the inward elements of a thought, as the *vital* embodiment of it: such figures as those of Goethe you will look for through all modern literature, and except here and there in Shakspeare, nowhere find a trace of. Again, it is the same faculty in higher exercise, that enables the poet to construct a Character. Here too Shakspeare and Goethe, unlike innumerable others, are *vital*; their construction begins at the *heart* and flows outward as the life-streams do; fashioning the *surface*, as it were, spontaneously. Those Macbeths and Falstaffs, accordingly, these Fausts and Philinas have a verisimilitude and life that separates them from all other fictions of late ages. All others, in comparison, have more or less the nature of hollow vizards, constructed from without inwards, painted *like*, and deceptively put in motion. Many years ago on finishing our first perusal of *Wilhelm Meister*, with a very mixed sentiment in other respects, we could not but feel that here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of these, than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation.

Neither, as an additional similarity (for the great is ever like itself), let the majestic Calmness of both be omitted; their perfect tolerance for all men and all things. This too proceeds from the same source, perfect clearness of vision: he who comprehends an object cannot hate it, has already begun to love it. In respect of style, no less than of character, this calmness and graceful smooth-flowing softness is again characteristic of both; though in Goethe the quality is more complete, having been matured by far more assiduous study. Goethe's style is perhaps to be reckoned the most excellent that our modern world, in any language, can exhibit. 'Even to a foreigner,' says one, 'it is full of character and secondary meanings; polished, yet vernacular and cordial, it sounds like the dialect of wise, antique-minded, true-hearted men: in poetry, brief, sharp, simple and expressive: in prose, perhaps still more pleasing; for it is at once concise and full, rich, clear, unpretending and melodious; and the sense, not presented in alternating flashes, piece after piece revealed and withdrawn, rises before us as in continuous dawning, and stands at last simultaneously complete, and bathed in the mellowest and rudest sunshine. It brings to mind what the prose of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, would have been, had they written under the good without the bad influences of that French precision, which has polished and attenuated, trimmed and impoverished all modern languages; made our meaning clear, and too often shallow as well as clear.'

Finally, as Shakspeare is to be considered as the greater nature of the two, so on the other hand we must admit him to have been the less cultivated, and much the more careless. What Shakspeare *could* have done we nowhere discover. A careless mortal, open to the Universe and its influences, not caring strenuously to open himself; who, Prometheus-like,

will scale Heaven (if it so must be), and is satisfied if he therewith pay the rent of his London Playhouse; who, had the Warwickshire Justice let him hunt deer unmolested, might, for many years more, have lived quiet on the green earth without such aerial journeys: an unparalleled mortal. In the great Goethe, again, we see a man through life at his utmost strain; a man who, as he says himself, 'struggled toughly;' laid hold of all things, under all aspects, scientific or poetic; engaged passionately with the deepest interests of man's existence, in the most complex age of man's history. What Shakspeare's thoughts on 'God, Nature, Art,' would have been, especially had he lived to number fourscore years, were curious to know: Goethe's, delivered in many-toned melody, as the apocalypse of our era, are here for us to know.

Such was the noble talent intrusted to this man; such the noble employment he made thereof. We can call him, once more, 'a clear and universal man;' we can say that, in his universality, as thinker, as singer, as worker, he lived a life of antique nobleness under these new conditions; and, in so living, is alone in all Europe; the foremost, whom others are to learn from and follow. In which great act, or rather great sum-total of many acts, who shall compute what treasure of new strengthening, of faith become hope and vision, lies secured for all! The question, Can man still live in devoutness, yet without blindness or contraction; in unconquerable steadfastness for the right, yet without tumultuous exasperation against the wrong; as an antique worthy, yet with the expansion and increased endowment of a modern? is no longer a question, but has become a certainty, and ocularly-visible fact.

We have looked at Goethe, as we engaged to do, 'on

this side,' and with the eyes of 'this generation;' that is to say, chiefly as a world-changer, and benignant spiritual revolutionist: for in our present so astonishing condition of 'progress of the species,' such is the category under which we must try all things, wisdom itself. And, indeed, under this aspect too, Goethe's Life and Works are doubtless of incalculable value, and worthy our most earnest study: for his Spiritual History is, as it were, the ideal emblem of all true men's in these days; the goal of Manhood, which he attained, we too in our degree have to aim at; let us mark well the road he fashioned for himself, and in the dim weltering chaos rejoice to find a paved way.

Here, moreover, another word of explanation is perhaps worth adding. We mean, in regard to the controversy agitated (as about many things pertaining to Goethe) about his Political creed and practice, Whether he was Ministerial or in Opposition? Let the political admirer of Goethe be at ease: Goethe was both, and also neither! The 'rotten whitewashed (*gebrechliche übertünchte*) condition of society' was plainer to few eyes than to his, sadder to few hearts than to his. Listen to the Epigrammatist at Venice:

To this stithy I liken the land, the hammer its ruler,
And the people that plate, beaten between them that writhes:
Woe to the plate, when nothing but wilful bruises on bruises
Hit it at random; and made, cometh no Kettle to view!

But, alas, what is to be done?

No Apostle-of-Liberty much to my heart ever found I;
License, each for himself, this was at bottom their want.
Liberator of many! first dare to be Servant of many:
What a business is that, wouldst thou know it, go try!

Let the following also be recommended to all inordinate worshippers of Septennials, Triennials, Elective Franchise,

and the Shameful Parts of the Constitution ; and let each be a little tolerant of his neighbour's ' festoon,' and rejoice that he has himself found out *Freedom*,—a thing much wanted :

Walls I can see tumbled down, walls I see also a-building ;
 Here sit prisoners, there likewise do prisoners sit :
 Is the world, then, itself a huge prison ? Free only the madman,
 His chains knitting still up into some graceful festoon ?

So that, for the Poet, what remains but to leave Conservative and Destructive pulling one another's locks and ears off, as they will and can (the ulterior issue being long since indubitable enough) ; and, for his own part, strive day and night to forward the small suffering remnant of *Productives* ; of those who, in true manful endeavour, were it under despotism or under sansculottism, create somewhat, with whom alone, in the end, does the hope of the world lie ? Go thou and do likewise ! Art thou *called* to politics, work therein, as this man would have done, like a real and not an imaginary workman. Understand well, meanwhile, that to no man is his political constitution ' a life, but only a house wherein his life is led : ' and hast thou a nobler task than such *house*-pargeting and smoke-doctoring, and pulling down of ancient rotten rat-inhabited walls, leave such to the proper craftsman ; honour the higher Artist, and good-humouredly say with him :

All this is neither my coat nor my cake,
 Why fill my hand with other men's charges ?
 The fishes swim at ease in the lake,
 And take no thought of the barges.

Goethe's political practice, or rather no-practice, except that of self-defence, is a part of his conduct quite inseparably coherent with the rest ; a thing we could recommend to

universal study, that the spirit of it might be understood by all men, and by all men imitated.

Nevertheless it is nowise alone on this revolutionary or 'progress-of-the-species' side that Goethe has significance; his Life and Work is no painted show but a solid reality, and may be looked at with profit on all sides, from all imaginable points of view. Perennial, as a possession forever, Goethe's History and Writings abide there; a thousand-voiced 'Melody of Wisdom,' which he that has ears may hear. What the experience of the most complexly-situated, deep-searching, everyway *far-experienced* man has yielded him of insight, lies written for all men here. He who was of compass to know and feel more than any other man, this is the record of his knowledge and feeling. 'The deepest heart, the highest head to scan,' was not beyond his faculty; thus, then, did he scan and interpret: let many generations listen, according to their want; let the generation which has no need of listening, and nothing new to learn there, esteem itself a happy one.

To us, meanwhile, to all that wander in darkness and seek light, as the one thing needful, be this possession reckoned among our choicest blessings and distinctions. *Colite talem virum*; learn of him, imitate, emulate him! So did *he* catch the Music of the Universe, and unfold it into clearness, and in authentic celestial tones bring it home to the hearts of men, from amid that soul-confusing Babylonish hubbub of this our new Tower-of-Babel era! For now too, as in that old time, had men said to themselves: Come, let us build a tower which shall reach to heaven; and by our steam-engines, and logic-engines, and skilful mechanism and manipulation, vanquish not only Physical Nature, but the divine Spirit of Nature, and scale the empyrean itself.

... Wherefore they must needs again be stricken with con-

fusion of tongues (or of printing-presses); and *dispersed*,—to other work; wherein also, let us hope, their hammers and trowels shall better avail them.—

Of Goethe, with a feeling such as can be due to no other man, we now take farewell. *Vixit, vivit.*

CORN-LAW RHYMES.

CORN-LAW RHYMES.¹

[1832.]

SMELFUNGUS REDIVIVUS, throwing down his critical assaying balance some years ago, and taking leave of the Belles-Lettres function, expressed himself in this abrupt way: ‘The end having come, it is fit that we end. Poetry having ceased to be read, or published, or written, how can it continue to be reviewed? With your Lake Schools, and Border-Thief Schools, and Cockney and Satanic Schools, there has been enough to do; and now, all these Schools having burnt or smouldered themselves out, and left nothing but a wide-spread wreck of ashes, dust and cinders, —or perhaps dying embers, kicked to and fro under the feet of innumerable women and children in the Magazines, and at best blown here and there into transient sputters, with vapour enough, so as to form what you might name a boundless Green-sick, or New-Sentimental, or Sleep-Awake School,—what remains but to adjust ourselves to circumstances? Urge me not,’ continues the able Editor, suddenly changing his figure, ‘with considerations that Poetry, as the inward voice of Life, must be perennial, only dead

¹ EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 110.—1. *Corn-Law Rhymes*. Third Edition. 8vo. London, 1831.

2. *Love; a Poem*. By the Author of “*Corn-Law Rhymes*.” Third Edition. 8vo. London, 1831.

3. *The Village Patriarch; a Poem*. By the Author of “*Corn-Law Rhymes*.” 12mo. London, 1831.

‘in one form to become alive in another; that this still abundant deluge of Metre, seeing there must needs be fractions of Poetry floating scattered in it, ought still to be net-fished, at all events surveyed and taken note of: the survey of English Metre, at this epoch, perhaps transcends the human faculties; to hire-out the reading of it, by estimate, at a remunerative rate per page, would, in few Quarters, reduce the cash-box of any extant Review to the verge of insolvency.’

What our distinguished contemporary has said remains said. Far be it from us to censure or counsel any able Editor; to draw aside the Editorial veil, and, officiously prying into his interior mysteries, impugn the laws he walks by! For Editors, as for others, there are times of perplexity, wherein the cunning of the wisest will scantily suffice his own wants, to say nothing of his neighbour’s.

To us, on our side, meanwhile, it remains clear that Poetry, or were it but Metre, should nowise be altogether neglected. Surely it is the Reviewer’s trade to sit watching, not only the tillage, crop-rotation, marketings and good or evil husbandry of the Economic Earth, but also the weather-symptoms of the Literary Heaven, on which those former so much depend: if any promising or threatening meteoric phenomenon make its appearance, and he proclaim not tidings thereof, it is at his peril. Farther, be it considered how, in this singular poetic epoch, a small matter constitutes a novelty. If the whole welkin hang overcast in drizzly dinginess, the feeblest light-gleam, or speck of blue, cannot pass unheeded.

➤ The Works of this Corn-Law Rhymer we might liken rather to some little fraction of a rainbow: hues of joy and harmony, painted out of troublous tears. No round full bow, indeed; gloriously spanning the heavens; shone on by the

full sun; and, with seven-striped, gold-crimson border (as is in some sort the office of Poetry) dividing Black from Brilliant: not such; alas, still far from it! Yet, in very truth, a little prismatic blush, glowing genuine among the wet clouds; which proceeds, if you will, from a sun cloud-hidden, yet indicates that a sun does shine, and above those vapours, a whole azure vault and celestial firmament stretch serene.

Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that here we have once more got sight of a Book calling itself Poetry, yet which actually is a kind of Book, and no empty paste-board Case, and simulacrum or 'ghost-defunct' of a Book, such as is too often palmed on the world, and handed over Booksellers' counters, with a demand of real money for it, as if it too were a reality. The speaker here is of that singular class who have something to say; whereby, though delivering himself in verse, and in these days, he does not deliver himself wholly in jargon, but articulately, and with a certain degree of meaning, that has been *believed*, and therefore is again believable.

To some the wonder and interest will be heightened by another circumstance: that the speaker in question is not school-learned, or even furnished with pecuniary capital; is, indeed, a quite unmoneyed, russet-coated speaker; nothing or little other than a Sheffield worker in brass and iron, who describes himself as 'one of the lower, little removed above the lowest class.' Be of what class he may, the man is provided, as we can perceive, with a rational god-created soul; which too has fashioned itself into some clearness, some self-subsistence, and can actually see and know with its own organs; and in rugged substantial English, nay with tones of poetic melody, utter forth what it has seen.

It used to be said that lions do not paint, that poor men

do not write; but the case is altering now. Here is a voice coming from the deep Cyclopean forges, where Labour, in real soot and sweat, beats with his thousand hammers 'the red son of the furnace;' doing personal battle with Necessity, and her dark brute Powers, to make them reasonable and serviceable; an intelligible voice from the hitherto Mute and Irrational, to tell us at first-hand how it is with him, what in very deed is the theorem of the world and of himself, which he, in those dim depths of his, in that wearied head of his, has put together. To which voice, in several respects significant enough, let good ear be given.

Here too be it premised, that nowise under the category of 'Uneducated Poets,' or in any fashion of dilettante patronage, can our Sheffield friend be produced. His position is unsuitable for that: so is ours. Genius, which the French lady declared to be of no sex, is much more certainly of no rank; neither when 'the spark of Nature's fire' has been imparted, should Education take high airs in her artificial light,—which is too often but phosphorescence and putrescence. In fact, it now begins to be suspected here and there, that this same aristocratic recognition, which looks down with an obliging smile from its throne, of bound Volumes and gold Ingots, and admits that it is wonderfully well for one of the uneducated classes, may be getting out of place. There are unhappy times in the world's history, when he that is the least educated will chiefly have to say that he is the least perverted; and with the multitude of false eye-glasses, convex, concave, green, even yellow, has not lost the natural use of his eyes. For a generation that reads Cobbett's Prose, and Burns's Poetry, it need be no miracle that here also is a man who can handle both pen and hammer like a man.

Nevertheless, this serene-highness attitude and temper

is so frequent, perhaps it were good to turn the tables for a moment, and see what look it has under that reverse aspect. How were it if we surmised, that for a man gifted with natural vigour, with a man's character to be developed in him, more especially if in the way of Literature, as Thinker and Writer, it is actually, in these strange days, no special misfortune to be trained up among the Uneducated classes, and not among the Educated; but rather of two misfortunes the smaller?

For all men, doubtless, obstructions abound; spiritual growth must be hampered and stunted, and has to struggle through with difficulty, if it do not wholly stop. We may grant, too, that, for a mediocre character, the continual training and tutoring, from language-masters, dancing-masters, posture-masters of all sorts, hired and volunteer, which a high rank in any time and country assures, there will be produced a certain superiority, or at worst, air of superiority, over the corresponding mediocre character of low rank: thus we perceive the vulgar Do-nothing, as contrasted with the vulgar Drudge, is in general a much prettier man; with a wider, perhaps clearer outlook into the distance; in innumerable superficial matters, however it may be when we go deeper, he has a manifest advantage. But with the man of uncommon character, again, in whom a germ of irrepressible Force has been implanted, and *will* unfold itself into some sort of freedom, altogether the reverse may hold. For such germs too, there is, undoubtedly enough, a proper soil where they will grow best, and an improper one where they will grow worst. True also, where there is a will, there is a way; where a genius has been given, a possibility, a certainty of its growing is also given. Yet often it seems as if the injudicious gardening and manuring were worse than none at all; and

killed what the inclemencies of blind chance would have spared. We find accordingly that few Fredericks or Napoleons, indeed none since the Great Alexander, who unfortunately drank himself to death too soon for proving what lay in him, were nursed up with an eye to their vocation: mostly with an eye quite the other way, in the midst of isolation and pain, destitution and contradiction. Nay in our own times, have we not seen two men of genius, a Byron and a Burns; they both, by mandate of Nature, struggle and must struggle towards clear Manhood, stormfully enough, for the space of six-and-thirty years; yet only the gifted Ploughman can partially prevail therein: the gifted Peer must toil and strive, and shoot-out in wild efforts, yet die at last in Boyhood, with the promise of his Manhood still but announcing itself in the distance. Truly, as was once written, 'it is only the artichoke that will not grow except 'in gardens; the acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the 'wilderness, yet on the wild soil it nourishes itself, and 'rises to be an oak.' All woodmen, moreover, will tell you that fat manure is the ruin of your oak; likewise that the thinner and wilder your soil, the tougher, more iron-textured is your timber,—though unhappily also the smaller. So too with the spirits of men: they become pure from their errors by suffering for them; he who has battled, were it only with Poverty and hard toil, will be found stronger, more expert, than he who could stay at home from the battle, concealed among the Provision-wagons, or even not unwatchfully 'abiding by the stuff.' In which sense, an observer, not without experience of our time, has said: Had I a man of clearly developed character (clear, sincere within its limits), of insight, courage and real applicable force of head and of heart, to search for; and not a man of luxuriously distorted character, with haughtiness for courage, and for insight and

applicable force, speculation and plausible show of force,—it were rather among the lower than among the higher classes that I should look for him.

A hard saying, indeed, seems this same: that he, whose other wants were all beforehand supplied; to whose capabilities no problem was presented except even this, How to cultivate them to best advantage, should attain less real culture than he whose first grand problem and obligation was nowise spiritual culture, but hard labour for his daily bread! Sad enough must the perversion be, where preparations of such magnitude issue in abortion; and so sumptuous an Art with all its appliances can accomplish nothing, not so much as necessitous Nature would of herself have supplied! Nevertheless, so pregnant is Life with evil as with good; to such height in an age rich, plethorically overgrown with means, can means be accumulated in the wrong place, and immeasurably aggravate wrong tendencies, instead of righting them, this sad and strange result may actually turn out to have been realised.

But what, after all, is meant by *uneducated*, in a time when Books have come into the world; come to be household furniture in every habitation of the civilised world? In the poorest cottage are Books; is one BOOK, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light, and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is Deepest in him; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result. 'In Books lie the creative phoenix-ashes of the whole Past.' All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt or imagined, lies recorded in Books; wherein whoso has learned

the mystery of spelling printed letters may find it, and appropriate it.

Nay, what indeed is all this? As if it were by universities and libraries and lecture-rooms, that man's Education, what we can call Education, were accomplished; solely, or mainly, by instilling the dead letter and record of other men's Force, that the living Force of a new man were to be awakened, enkindled and purified into victorious clearness! Foolish Pedant, that sittest there compassionately descanting on the Learning of Shakspeare! Shakspeare had penetrated into innumerable things; far into Nature with her divine Splendours and infernal Terrors, her Ariel Melodies, and mystic mandragora Moans; far into man's workings with Nature, into man's Art and Artifice; Shakspeare knew (*kenned*, which in those days still partially meant *can-ned*) innumerable things; what men are, and what the world is, and how and what men aim at there, from the Dame Quickly of modern Eastcheap to the Cæsar of ancient Rome, over many countries, over many centuries: of all this he had the clearest understanding and constructive comprehension; all this was his Learning and Insight; what now is thine? Insight into none of those things; perhaps, strictly considered, into no thing whatever: solely into thy own sheepskin diplomas, fat academic honours, into vocables and alphabetic letters, and but a little way into these!—The grand result of schooling is a mind with just vision to discern, with free force to do: the grand schoolmaster is Practice.

And now, when *kenning* and *can-ning* have become two altogether different words; and this, the first principle of human culture, the foundation-stone of all but false imaginary culture, that men must, before every other thing, be trained to *do* somewhat, has been, for some generations, laid quietly on the shelf, with such result as we see,—consider

what advantage those same uneducated Working classes have over the educated Unworking classes, in one particular; herein, namely, that they must *work*. To work! What incalculable sources of cultivation lie in that process, in that attempt; how it lays hold of the whole man, not of a small theoretical calculating fraction of him, but of the whole practical, doing and daring and enduring man; thereby to awaken dormant faculties, root-out old errors, at every step!

[He that has done nothing has known nothing.] Vain is it ←
to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing: up and be doing] If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee: grapple with real Nature; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. Do one thing, for the first time in thy life do a thing; a new light will rise to thee on the doing of all things whatsoever. Truly, a boundless significance lies in work; whereby the humblest craftsman comes to attain much, which is of indispensable use, but which he who is of no craft, were he never so high, runs the risk of missing. Once turn to Practice, Error and Truth will no longer consort together: the result of Error involves you in the square-root of a negative quantity; try to *extract* that, to extract any earthly substance or sustenance from that! The honourable Member can discover that 'there is a reaction,' and believe it, and wearisomely reason on it, in spite of all men, while he so pleases, for still his wine and his oil will not fail him: but the sooty Brazier, who discovered that brass was green-cheese, has to act on his discovery; finds therefore, that, singular as it may seem, brass cannot be masticated for dinner, green-cheese will not beat into fire-proof dishes; that such discovery, therefore, has no legs to stand on, and must even be let fall. Now, take this principle of difference through the entire lives of two men, and calculate what it will amount to! Necessity, moreover, which we

here see as the mother of Accuracy, is well known as the mother of Invention. He who wants everything must know many things, do many things, to procure even a few: different enough with him, whose indispensable knowledge is this only, that a finger will pull the bell!

So that, for all men who live, we may conclude, this Life of Man is a school, wherein the naturally foolish will continue foolish though you bray him in a mortar, but the naturally wise will gather wisdom under every disadvantage. What, meanwhile, must be the condition of an Era, when the highest advantages there become perverted into drawbacks; when, if you take two men of genius, and put the one between the handles of a plough, and mount the other between the painted coronets of a coach-and-four, and bid them both move along, the former shall arrive a Burns, the latter a Byron: two men of talent, and put the one into a Printer's chapel, full of lamp-black, tyrannous usage, hard toil, and the other into Oxford universities, with lexicons and libraries, and hired expositors and sumptuous endowments, the former shall come out a Dr. Franklin, the latter a Dr. Parr!—

However, we are not here to write an Essay on Education, or sing *misereres* over a 'world in its dotage;' but simply to say that our Corn-Law Rhymer, educated or uneducated as Nature and Art have made him, asks not the smallest patronage or compassion for his rhymes, professes not the smallest contrition for them. Nowise in such attitude does he present himself; not supplicatory, deprecatory, but sturdy, defiant, almost menacing. Wherefore, indeed, should he supplicate or deprecate? It is out of the abundance of the heart that he has spoken: praise or blame cannot make it truer or falser than it already is. By the

grace of God this man is sufficient for himself; by his skill in metallurgy can beat out a toilsome but a manful living, go how it may; has arrived too at that singular audacity of believing what he knows, and acting on it, or writing on it, or thinking on it, without leave asked of any one: there shall he stand, and work, with head and with hand, for himself and the world; blown about by no wind of doctrine; frightened at no Reviewer's shadow; having, in his time, looked substances enough in the face, and remained unfrightened.

What is left, therefore, but to take what he brings, and as he brings it? Let us be thankful, were it only for the day of small things. Something it is that we have lived to welcome once more a sweet Singer wearing the likeness of a Man. In humble guise, it is true, and of stature more or less marred in its development; yet not without a genial robustness, strength and valour built on honesty and love; on the whole, a genuine man, with somewhat of the eye and speech and bearing that beseems a man. To whom all other genuine men, how different soever in subordinate particulars, can gladly hold out the right hand of fellowship.

The great excellence of our Rhymer, be it understood, then, we take to consist even in this, often hinted at already, that he is *genuine*. Here is an earnest truth-speaking man; no theoriser, sentimentaliser, but a practical man of work and endeavour, man of sufferance and endurance. The thing that he speaks is not a hearsay, but a thing which he has himself known, and by experience become assured of. He has used his eyes for seeing; uses his tongue for declaring what he has seen. His voice, therefore, among the many noises of our Planet, will deserve its place better than the most; will be well worth some attention. Whom else should we attend to but such? The man who speaks with some

half shadow of a Belief, and supposes, and inclines to think; and considers not with undivided soul, what is true, but only what is plausible, and will find audience and recompense: do we not meet him at every street-turning, on all highways and byways; is he not stale, unprofitable, ineffectual, wholly grown a weariness of the flesh? So rare is his opposite in any rank of Literature or of Life, so very rare, that even in the lowest he is precious. The authentic insight and experience of any human soul, were it but insight and experience in hewing of wood and drawing of water, is real knowledge, a real possession and acquirement, how small soever: *palabra*, again, were it a supreme pontiff's, is wind merely, and nothing, or less than nothing. To a considerable degree, this man, we say, has worked himself loose from cant and conjectural halfness, idle pretences and hallucinations, into a condition of Sincerity. Wherein, perhaps, as above argued, his hard social environment, and fortune to be 'a workman born,' which brought so many other retardations with it, may have forwarded and accelerated him.

That a man, Workman or Idleman, encompassed, as in these days, with persons in a state of willing or unwilling Insincerity, and necessitated, as man is, to learn whatever he does traditionally learn by *imitating* these, should nevertheless shake off Insincerity, and struggle out from that dim pestiferous marsh-atmosphere, into a clearer and purer height,—betokens in him a certain Originality; in which rare gift, force of all kinds is presupposed. To our Rhymer, accordingly, as hinted more than once, vision and determination have not been denied: a rugged, homegrown understanding is in him; whereby, in his own way, he has mastered this and that, and looked into various things, in general honestly and to purpose, sometimes deeply, pierc-

ingly and with a Seer's eye. Strong thoughts are not wanting, beautiful thoughts; strong and beautiful expressions of thought. As traceable, for instance, in this new illustration of an old argument, the mischief of Commercial Restrictions:

These, O ye quacks, these are your remedies :
 Alms for the Rich, a bread-tax for the Poor !
 Soul-purchased harvests on the indigent moor !—
 Thus the winged victor of a hundred fights,
 The warrior Ship, bows low her banner'd head,
 When through her planks the seaborne reptile bites
 Its deadly way ;—and sinks in Ocean's bed,
 Vanquish'd by worms. What then ? The worms were fed.
 Will not God smite thee black, thou whited wall ?
 Thy life is lawless, and thy law a lie,
 Or Nature is a dream unnatural :
 Look on the clouds, the streams, the earth, the sky ;
 Lo, all is interchange and harmony !
 Where is the gorgeous pomp which, yester morn,
 Curtain'd yon Orb with amber, fold on fold ?
 Behold it in the blue of Rivelin, borne
 To feed the all-feeding sea ! The molten gold
 Is flowing pale in Loxley's waters cold,
 To kindle into beauty tree and flower,
 And wake to verdant life hill, vale and plain.
 Cloud trades with river, and exchange is power :
 But should the clouds, the streams, the winds disdain
 Harmonious intercourse, nor dew nor rain
 Would forest-crown the mountains : airless day
 Would blast on Kinderscout the heathy glow ;
 No purple green would meeken into gray
 O'er Don at eve ; no sound of river's flow
 Disturb the Sepulchre of all below.

Nature and the doings of men have not passed by this man unheeded, like the endless cloud-rack in dull weather ; or lightly heeded, like a theatric phantasmagoria ; but earnestly

inquired into, like a thing of reality; reverently loved and worshipped, as a thing with divine significance in its reality, glimpses of which divineness he has caught and laid to heart. For his vision, as was said, partakes of the genuinely Poetical; he is not a Rhymer and Speaker only, but, in some genuine sense, something of a Poet.

Farther, we must admit him, what indeed is already herein admitted, to be, if clear-sighted, also brave-hearted. A troublous element is his; a Life of painfulness, toil, insecurity, scarcity; yet he fronts it like a man; yields not to it, tames it into some subjection, some order; its wild fearful dinning and tumult, as of a devouring Chaos, becomes a sort of wild war-music for him; wherein too are passages of beauty, of melodious melting softness, of lightness and briskness, even of joy. The stout heart is also a warm and kind one; Affection dwells with Danger, all the holier and the lovelier for such stern environment. A working man is this; yet, as we said, a man: in his sort, a courageous, much-loving, faithfully enduring and endeavouring man.

What such a one, so gifted and so placed, shall say to a Time like ours; how he will fashion himself into peace, or war, or armed neutrality, with the world and his fellow-men; and work out his course in joy and grief, in victory and defeat, is a question worth asking: which in these three little Volumes partly receives answer. He has turned, as all thinkers up to a very high and rare order in these days must do, into Politics; is a Reformer, at least a stern Complainer, Radical to the core: his poetic melody takes an elegiaco-tragical character; much of him is converted into hostility, and grim, hardly-suppressed indignation, such as right long denied, hope long deferred, may awaken in the kindest heart. Not yet as a rebel against anything does he stand; but as a free man, and the spokesman of

free men, not far from rebelling against much; with sorrowful appealing dew, yet also with incipient lightning, in his eyes; whom it were not desirable to provoke into rebellion. He says in Vulcanic dialect, his feelings have been *hammered* till they are *cold-short*; so they will no longer bend; 'they snap, and fly off,'—in the face of the hammerer. Not unnatural, though lamentable! Nevertheless, under all disguises of the Radical, the Poet is still recognisable: a certain music breathes through all dissonances, as the prophecy and ground-tone of returning harmony; the man, as we said, is of a poetical nature.

To his Political Philosophy there is perhaps no great importance attachable. He feels, as all men that live must do, the disorganisation, and hard-grinding, unequal pressure of our Social Affairs; but sees into it only a very little farther than far inferior men do. [The frightful condition of a Time, when public and private Principle, as the word was once understood, having gone out of sight, and Self-interest being left to plot, and struggle, and scramble, as it could and would,] Difficulties had accumulated till they were no longer to be borne, and the spirit that should have fronted and conquered them seemed to have forsaken the world;—when the Rich, as the utmost they could resolve on, had ceased to govern, and the Poor, in their fast-accumulating numbers, and ever-widening complexities, had ceased to be able to do without governing; and now the plan of 'Competition' and '*Laissez-faire*' was, on every side, approaching its consummation; and each, bound-up in the circle of his own wants and perils, stood grimly distrustful of his neighbour, and the distracted Common-weal was a Common-woe, and to all men it became apparent that the end was drawing nigh:—all this black aspect of Ruin and Decay, visible enough, experimentally known to our Sheffield friend, he

calls by the name of 'Corn-Law,' and expects to be in good part delivered from, were the accursed Bread-tax repealed.

In this system of political Doctrine, even as here so emphatically set forth, there is not much of novelty. Radicals we have many; loud enough on this and other grievances; the removal of which is to be the one thing needful. The deep, wide flood of bitterness, and hope becoming hopeless, lies acrid, corrosive in every bosom; and flows fiercely enough through any orifice Accident may open: through Law-Reform, Legislative Reform, Poor-Laws, want of Poor-Laws, Tithes, Game-Laws, or, as we see here, Corn-Laws. Whereby indeed only this becomes clear, that a deep, wide flood of evil does exist and corrode; from which, in all ways, blindly and seeingly, men seek deliverance, and cannot rest till they find it; least of all till they know what part and proportion of it is to *be* found. [But with us foolish sons of Adam this is ever the way: some evil that lies nearest us, be it a chronic sickness, or but a smoky chimney, is ever the acme and sum-total of all evil; the black hydra that shuts us out from a Promised Land; and so, in poor Mr. Shandy's fashion, must we 'shift from trouble to trouble, and from side 'to side; button-up one cause of vexation, and unbutton 'another.'

Thus for our keen-hearted singer, and sufferer, has the 'Bread-tax,' in itself a considerable but no immeasurable smoke-pillar, swoln out to be a world-embracing Darkness, that darkens and suffocates the whole earth, and has blotted out the heavenly stars. Into the merit of the Corn-Laws, which has often been discussed, in fit season, by competent hands, we do not enter here; least of all in the way of argument, in the way of blame, towards one who, if he read such merit with some emphasis 'on the scantier trenchers of his children,' may well be pardoned. That the 'Bread-tax,' with

various other taxes, may ere long be altered and abrogated, and the Corn-Trade become as free as the poorest 'bread-taxed drudge' could wish it, or the richest 'satrap bread-taxed' could fear it, seems no extravagant hypothesis: would that the mad Time could, by such simple hellebore-dose, be healed! Alas for the diseases of a world lying in wickedness, in heart-sickness and atrophy, quite another alcahest is needed;—a long, painful course of medicine and regimen, surgery and physic, not yet specified or indicated in the Royal-College Books!

But if there is little novelty in our friend's Political Philosophy, there is some in his political Feeling and Poetry. The peculiarity of this Radical is, that with all his stormful destructiveness he combines a decided loyalty and faith. If he despise and trample under foot on the one hand, he exalts and reverences on the other; the 'landed pauper in his coach-and-four' rolls all the more glaringly, contrasted with the 'Rockinghams and Savilles' of the past, with the 'Lansdowns and Fitzwilliams,' many a 'Wentworth's lord,' still 'a blessing' to the present. This man, indeed, has in him the root of all reverence,—a principle of Religion. He believes in a Godhead, not with the lips only, but apparently with the heart; who, as has been written, and often felt, 'reveals Himself in Parents, in all true Teachers and Rulers,'—as in false Teachers and Rulers quite Another may be revealed! Our Rhymer, it would seem, is no Methodist: far enough from it. He makes 'the Ranter,' in his hot-headed way, exclaim over

The Hundred Popes of England's Jesuistry;

and adds, by way of note, in his own person, some still stronger sayings: How 'this baneful corporation, dismal as 'its Reign of Terror is, and long-armed its Holy Inquisition,

‘ must condescend to learn and teach what is useful, or go ‘ where all nuisances go.’ As little perhaps is he a Churchman; the ‘Cadi-Dervish’ seems nowise to his mind. Scarcely, however, if at all, does he show aversion to the Church as Church; or, among his many griefs, touch upon Tithes as one. But, in any case, the black colours of Life, even as here painted, and brooded over, do not hide from him that a God is the Author and Sustainer thereof; that God’s world, if made a House of Imprisonment, can also be a House of Prayer; wherein for the weary and heavy-laden pity and hope are not altogether cut away.

It is chiefly in virtue of this inward temper of heart, with the clear disposition and adjustment which for all else results therefrom, that our Radical attains to be Poetical; that the harsh groanings, contentions, upbraidings, of one who unhappily has felt constrained to adopt such mode of utterance, become ennobled into something of music. If a land of bondage, this is still his Father’s land, and the bondage endures not forever. As worshipper and believer, the captive can look with seeing eye: the aspect of the Infinite Universe still fills him with an Infinite feeling; his chains, were it but for moments, fall away; he soars free aloft, and the sunny regions of Poesy and Freedom gleam golden afar on the widened horizon. Gleamings we say, prophetic dawnings from those far regions, spring up for him; nay, beams of actual radiance. In his ruggedness, and dim contractedness (rather of place than of organ), he is not without touches of a feeling and vision, which, even in the stricter sense, is to be named poetical.

One deeply poetical idea, above all others, seems to have taken hold of him: the idea of TIME. As was natural to a poetic soul, with few objects of Art in its environment, and driven inward, rather than invited outward, for occupation.

This deep mystery of ever-flowing Time; bringing forth, and as the Ancients wisely fabled, devouring what it has brought forth; rushing on, *in* us, yet above us, all uncontrollable by us; and under it, dimly visible athwart it, the bottomless Eternal;—this is, indeed, what we may call the primary idea of Poetry; the first that introduces itself into the poetic mind. As here :

The bee shall seek to settle on his hand,
But from the vacant bench haste to the moor,
Mourning the last of England's high-soul'd Poor,
And bid the mountains weep for Enoch Wray.
And for themselves,—albeit of things that last
Unalter'd most; for they shall pass away
Like Enoch, though their iron roots seem fast,
Bound to the eternal future as the past :
The Patriarch died ; and they shall be no more !
Yes, and the sailless worlds, which navigate
The unutterable Deep that hath no shore,
Will lose their starry splendour soon or late,
Like tapers, quench'd by Him, whose will is fate !
Yes, and the Angel of Eternity,
Who numbers worlds and writes their names in light,
One day, O Earth, will look in vain for thee,
And start and stop in his unerring flight,
And with his wings of sorrow and affright
Veil his impassion'd brow and heavenly tears !

And not the first idea only, but the greatest, properly the parent of all others. For if it can rise in the remotest ages, in the rudest states of culture, wherever an 'inspired thinker' happens to exist, it connects itself still with all great things; with the highest results of new Philosophy, as of primeval Theology; and for the Poet, in particular, is as the life-element, wherein alone his conceptions can take poetic form and the whole world become miraculous and magical.

We are such stuff

As Dreams are made of : and our little life
Is rounded with a Sleep !

Figure that, believe that, O Reader; then say whether the *Arabian Tales* seem wonderful!—‘Rounded with a sleep’ (*mit Schlaf umgeben*)!’ says Jean Paul; ‘these three words’ created whole volumes in me.’

To turn now on our worthy Rhymer, who has brought us so much, and stingily insist on his errors and shortcomings, were no honest procedure. We should have the whole poetical encyclopædia to draw upon, and say commodiously, Such and such an item is *not* here; of which encyclopædia the highest genius can fill but a portion. With much merit, far from common in his time, he is not without something of the faults of his time. We praised him for originality; yet is there a certain remainder of imitation in him; a tang of the Circulating Libraries; as in Sancho’s wine, with its key and thong, there was a tang of iron and leather. To be reminded of Crabbe, with his truthful severity of style, in such a place, we cannot object; but what if there were a slight bravura dash of the fair tuneful Hemans? Still more, what have we to do with Byron, and his fierce vociferous mouthings, whether ‘passionate,’ or not passionate and only theatrical? King Cambyses’ vein is, after all, but a worthless one; no vein for a wise man. Strength, if that be the thing aimed at, does not manifest itself in spasms, but in stout bearing of burdens. Our Author says, ‘It is too bad to exalt into a hero the coxcomb who would have gone into hysterics if a tailor had laughed at him.’ Walk not in his footsteps, then, we say, whether as hero or as singer; repent a little, for example, over somewhat in that fuliginous, blue-flaming, pitch-and-sulphur ‘Dream of Enoch Wray,’ and write the next otherwise.

We mean no imitation in a bad palpable sense ; only that there is a tone of such occasionally audible, which ought to be removed ;—of which, in any case, we make not much. Imitation is a leaning on something foreign ; incompleteness of individual development, defect of free utterance. From the same source spring most of our Author's faults ; in particular, his worst, which, after all, is intrinsically a defect of manner. He has little or no Humour. Without Humour of character he cannot well be ; but it has not yet got to utterance. Thus, where he has mean things to deal with, he knows not how to deal with them ; oftenest deals with them more or less meanly. In his vituperative prose Notes, he seems embarrassed ; and but ill hides his embarrassment, under an air of predetermined sarcasm, of knowing briskness, almost of vulgar pertness. He says, he cannot help it ; he is poor, hard-worked, and 'soot is soot.' True, indeed ; yet there is no connexion between Poverty and Discourtesy ; which latter originates in Dulness alone. Courtesy is the due of man to man ; not of suit-of-clothes to suit-of-clothes. He who could master so many things, and make even Corn-Laws rhyme, we require of him this farther thing : a bearing worthy of himself, and of the order he belongs to,—the highest and most ancient of all orders, that of Manhood. A pert snappishness is no manner for a brave man ; and then the manner so soon influences the matter : a far worse result. Let him speak wise things, and speak them wisely ; which latter may be done in many dialects, grave and gay, only in the snappish dialect seldom or never.

The truth is, as might have been expected, there is still much lying in him to be developed ; the hope of which development it were rather sad to abandon. Why, for example, should not his view of the world, his knowledge of what is and has been in the world, indefinitely extend itself ? Were

he merely the 'uneducated Poet,' we should say, he had read largely; as he is not such, we say, Read still more, much more largely. Books enough there are in England, and of quite another weight and worth than that circulating-library sort; may be procured too, may be read, even by a hard-worked man; for what man (either in God's service or the Devil's, as himself chooses it) is not hard-worked? But here again, where there is a will there is a way. True, our friend is no longer in his teens; yet still, as would seem, in the vigour of his years: we hope too that his mind is not finally shut-in, but of the improvable and enlargeable sort. If Alfieri (also kept busy enough, with horse-breaking and what not) learned Greek after he was fifty, why is the Corn-Law Rhymer too old to learn?

However, be in the future what there may, our Rhymer has already done what was much more difficult, and better than reading printed books;—looked into the great prophetic manuscript Book of Existence, and read little passages there. Here, for example, is a sentence tolerably spelled:

Where toils the Mill by ancient woods embraced,
Hark, how the cold steel screams in hissing fire!
Blind Enoch sees the Grinder's wheel no more,
Couch'd beneath rocks and forests, that admire
Their beauty in the waters, ere they roar
Dash'd in white foam the swift circumference o'er.
There draws the Grinder his laborious breath;
There coughing at his deadly trade he bends:
Born to die young, he fears nor man nor death;
Scorning the future, what he earns he spends;
Debauch and riot are his bosom friends.

Behold his failings! Hath he virtues too?
He is no Pauper, blackguard though he be:

Full well he knows what minds combined can do,
 Full well maintains his birthright : he is free,
 And, frown for frown, outstares monopoly.
 Yet Abraham and Elliot both in vain
 Bid science on his cheek prolong the bloom :
 He *will* not live ! He seems in haste to gain
 The undisturb'd asylum of the tomb,
 And, old at two-and-thirty, meets his doom !

Or this, ' of Jem, the rogue avowed,'

Whose trade is Poaching ! Honest Jem works not,
 Beggars not, but thrives by plundering beggars here.
 Wise as a lord, and quite as good a shot,
 He, like his betters, lives in hate and fear,
 And feeds on partridge because bread is dear.
 Sire of six sons apprenticed to the jail,
 He prowls in arms, the Tory of the night ;
 With them he shares his battles and his ale,
 With him they feel the majesty of might,
 No Despot better knows that Power is Right.
 Mark his unpaidish sneer, his lordly frown ;
 Hark how he calls the beadle and flunky liars ;
 See how magnificently he breaks down
 His neighbour's fence, if so his will requires,
 And how his struttle emulates the squire's !

* * * * *

Jem rises with the Moon ; but when she sinks,
 Homeward with sack-like pockets, and quick heels,
 Hungry as boroughmongering gowl, he slinks.
He reads not, writes not, thinks not, scarcely feels ;
 Steals all he gets ; serves Hell with all he steals !

It is rustic, rude existence ; barren moors, with the smoke
 of Forges rising over the waste expanse. Alas, no Arcadia ;
 but the actual dwelling-place of actual toil-grimed sons of
 Tubalcain : yet are there blossoms, and the wild natural
 fragrance of gorse and broom ; yet has the Craftsman pauses

in his toil; the Craftsman too has an inheritance in Earth,
and even in Heaven:

Light! All is not corrupt, for thou art pure,
Unchanged and changeless. Though frail man is vile,
Thou look'st on him; serene, sublime, secure,
Yet, like thy Father, with a pitying smile.
Even on this wintry day, as marble cold,
Angels might quit their home to visit thee,
And match their plumage with thy mantle roll'd
Beneath God's Throne, o'er billows of a sea
Whose isles are Worlds, whose bounds Infinity.
Why, then, is Enoch absent from my side?
I miss the rustle of his silver hair;
A guide no more, I seem to want a guide,
While Enoch journeys to the house of prayer;
Ah, ne'er came Sabbath-day but he was there!
Lo how, like him, erect and strong though gray,
Yon village-tower time-touch'd to God appeals!
And hark! the chimes of morning die away:
Hark! to the heart the solemn sweetness steals,
Like the heart's voice, unfelt by none who feels
That God is Love, that Man is living Dust;
Unfelt by none whom ties of brotherhood
Link to his kind; by none who puts his trust
In nought of Earth that hath survived the Flood,
Save those mute charities, by which the good
Strengthen poor worms, and serve their Maker best.
Hail, Sabbath! Day of mercy, peace and rest!
Thou o'er loud cities throw'st a noiseless spell;
The hammer there, the wheel, the saw molest
Pale Thought no more: o'er Trade's contentious hell
Meek Quiet spreads her wings invisible.
And when thou com'st, less silent are the fields,
Through whose sweet paths the toil-freed townsman steals
To him the very air a banquet yields.
Envious he watches the poised hawk that wheels
His flight on chainless winds. Each cloud reveals

A paradise of beauty to his eye.
 His little Boys are with him, seeking flowers,
 Or chasing the too-venturous gilded fly.
 So by the daisy's side he spends the hours,
 Renewing friendship with the budding bowers :
 And while might, beauty, good without alloy,
 Are mirror'd in his children's happy eyes,—
 In His great Temple offering thankful joy
 To Him, the infinitely Great and Wise,
 With soul attuned to Nature's harmonies,
 Serene and cheerful as a sporting child,—
 His *heart* refuses to believe that man
 Could turn into a hell the blooming wild,
 The blissful country where his childhood ran
 A race with infant rivers, ere began—

—‘king-humbling’ Bread-tax, ‘blind Misrule,’ and several other crabbed things!

And so our Corn-Law Rhymer plays his part. In this wise does he indite and act his Drama of Life, which for him is all-too Domestic-Tragical. It is said, ‘the good actor soon makes us forget the bad theatre, were it but a barn; while, again, nothing renders so apparent the badness of the bad actor as a theatre of peculiar excellence.’ How much more in a theatre and drama such as these of Life itself! One other item, however, we must note in that ill-decorated Sheffield theatre: the back-scene and bottom-decoration of it all; which is no other than a Workhouse. Alas, the Workhouse is the bourne whither all these actors and workers are bound; whence none that has once passed it returns! A bodeful sound, like the rustle of approaching world-devouring tornadoes, quivers through their whole existence; and the voice of it is, Pauperism! The thanksgiving they offer up to Heaven is, that they are not

yet Paupers; the earnest cry of their prayer is, that 'God would shield them from the bitterness of Parish Pay.'

Mournful enough, that a white European Man must pray wistfully for what the horse he drives is sure of,—That the strain of his whole faculties may not fail to earn him food and lodging. Mournful that a gallant manly spirit, with an eye to discern the world, a heart to reverence it, a hand cunning and willing to labour in it, must be haunted with such a fear. The grim end of it all, Beggary! A soul loathing, what true souls ever loathe, Dependence, help from the unworthy to help; yet sucked into the world-whirlpool,—able to do no other: the highest in man's heart struggling vainly against the lowest in man's destiny! [In good truth, if many a sickly and sulky Byron, or Byronlet, glooming over the woes of existence, and how unworthy God's Universe is to have so distinguished a resident, could transport himself into the patched coat and sooty apron of a Sheffield Blacksmith, made with as strange faculties and feelings as he, made by God Almighty all one as he was,—it would throw a light on much for him.)

Meanwhile, is it not frightful as well as mournful to consider how the wide-spread evil is spreading wider and wider? Most persons, who have had eyes to look with, may have verified, in their own circle, the statement of this Sheffield Eye-witness, and 'from their own knowledge and observation fearlessly declare that the little master-manufacturer, 'that the working man generally, is in a much worse condition than he was twenty-five years ago.' Unhappily, the fact is too plain; the reason and scientific necessity of it is too plain. In this mad state of things, every new man is a new misfortune; every new market a new complexity; the chapter of chances grows ever more incalculable; the hungry gamesters (whose stake is their life) are ever in-

creasing in numbers; the world-movement rolls on: by what method shall the weak and help-needing, who has none to help him, withstand it? Alas, how many brave hearts, ground to pieces in that unequal battle, have already sunk; in every sinking heart, a Tragedy, less famous than that of the Sons of Atreus; wherein, however, if no 'kingly house,' yet a manly house went to the dust, and a whole manly lineage was swept away! Must it grow worse and worse, till the last brave heart is broken in England; and this same 'brave Peasantry' has become a kennel of wild-howling ravenous Paupers? God be thanked! there is some feeble shadow of hope that the change may have begun while it was yet time. You may lift the pressure from the free man's shoulders, and bid him go forth rejoicing; but lift the slave's burden, he will only wallow the more composedly in his sloth: a nation of degraded men cannot be raised up, except by what we rightly name a miracle.

Under which point of view also, these little Volumes, indicating such a character in such a place, are not without significance. One faint symptom, perhaps, that clearness will return, that there is a possibility of its return. It is as if from that Gehenna of Manufacturing Radicalism, from amid its loud roaring and cursing, whereby nothing became feasible, nothing knowable, except this only, that misery and malady existed there, we heard now some manful tone of reason and determination, wherein alone can there be profit, or promise of deliverance. In this Corn-Law Rhymer we seem to trace something of the antique spirit; a spirit which had long become invisible among our working as among other classes; which here, perhaps almost for the first time, reveals itself in an altogether modern political vesture. 'The Pariahs of the Isle of Woe,'

as he passionately names them, are no longer Pariahs if they have become Men. Here is one man of their tribe; in several respects a true man; who has abjured Hypocrisy and Servility, yet not therewith trodden Religion and Loyalty under foot; not without justness of insight, devoutness, peaceable heroism of resolve; who, in all circumstances, even in these strange ones, will be found quitting himself like a man. One such that has found a voice: who knows how many mute but not inactive brethren he may have, in his own and in all other ranks? Seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal! These are the men, wheresoever found, who are to stand forth in England's evil day, on whom the hope of England rests.

[For it has been often said, and must often be said again, that all Reform except a moral one will prove unavailing] Political Reform, pressingly enough wanted, can indeed root-out the weeds (gross deep-fixed lazy dock-weeds, poisonous obscene hemlocks, ineffectual spurry in abundance); but it leaves the ground *empty*,—ready either for noble fruits, or for new worse tares! And how else is a Moral Reform to be looked for but in this way, that more and more Good Men are, by a bountiful Providence, sent hither to disseminate Goodness; literally to *sow* it, as in seeds shaken abroad by the living tree? For such, in all ages and places, is the nature of a Good Man; he is ever a mystic creative centre of Goodness; his influence, if we consider it, is not to be measured; for his works do not die, but being of Eternity, are eternal; and in new transformation, and ever-wider diffusion, endure, living and life-giving. Thou who exclaimest over the horrors and baseness of the Time, and how Diogenes would now need *two* lanterns in daylight, think of this: over the Time thou hast no power; to redeem a World sunk in dishonesty has not been given thee:

[solely over one man therein thou hast a quite absolute uncontrollable power ; him redeem, him make honest ; it will be something, it will be much, and thy life and labour not in vain.]

We have given no epitomised abstract of these little Books, such as is the Reviewer's wont: we would gladly persuade many a reader, high and low, who takes interest not in rhyme only, but in reason, and the condition of his fellow-man, to purchase and peruse them for himself. It is proof of an innate love of worth, and how willingly the Public, did not thousand-voiced Puffery so confuse it, would have to do with substances, and not with deceptive shadows, that these Volumes carry 'Third Edition' marked on them,—on all of them but the newest, whose fate with the reading world we yet know not; which, however, seems to deserve not worse but better than either of its forerunners.

Nay, it appears to us as if in this humble Chant of the *Village Patriarch* might be traced rudiments of a truly great idea; great though all undeveloped. The Rhapsody of 'Enoch Wray' is, in its nature and unconscious tendency, Epic; a whole world lies shadowed in it. What we might call an inarticulate, half-audible Epic! The main figure is a blind aged man; himself a ruin, and encircled with the ruin of a whole Era. Sad and great does that image of a universal Dissolution hover visible as a poetic background. Good old Enoch! He could *do* so much; was so wise, so valiant. No Ilion had he destroyed; yet somewhat he had built up: where the Mill stands noisy by its cataract, making corn into bread for men, it was Enoch that reared it, and made the rude rocks send it water; where the mountain Torrent now boils in vain, and is mere passing music to the traveller, it was Enoch's cunning that spanned it with that

that strong Arch, grim, time-defying. Where Enoch's hand or mind has been, Disorder has become Order; Chaos has receded some little handbreadth, had to give up some new handbreadth of his ancient realm. Enoch too has seen his followers fall round him (by stress of hardship, and the arrows of the gods), has performed funeral games for them, and raised sandstone memorials, and carved his *Abiit ad Plures* thereon, with his own hand. The living chronicle and epitome of a whole century; when he departs, a whole century will become dead, historical.

Rudiments of an Epic, we say; and of the true Epic of our Time,—were the genius but arrived that could sing it! Not 'Arms and the Man;' 'Tools and the Man,' that were now our Epic. What indeed are Tools, from the Hammer and Plummot of Enoch Wray to this Pen we now write with, but Arms, wherewith to do battle against UNREASON without or within, and smite in pieces not miserable fellow-men, but the Arch-Enemy that makes us all miserable; henceforth the only legitimate battle!

Which Epic, as we granted, is here altogether imperfectly sung; scarcely a few notes thereof brought freely out: nevertheless with indication, with prediction that it will be sung. Such is the purport and merit of the *Village Patriarch*; it struggles towards a noble utterance, which however it can nowise find. Old Enoch is from the first speechless, heard of rather than heard or seen; at best, mute, motionless like a stone pillar of his own carving. Indeed, to find fit utterance for such meaning as lies struggling here, is a problem, to which the highest poetic minds may long be content to accomplish only approximate solutions. Meanwhile, our honest Rhymer, with no guide but the instinct of a clear natural talent, has created and adjusted somewhat, not without vitality of union; has avoided

somewhat, the road to which lay open enough. His *Village Patriarch*, for example, though of an elegiac strain, is not wholly lachrymose, not without touches of rugged gaiety;—is like Life itself, with tears and toil, with laughter and rude play, such as metallurgic Yorkshire sees it: in which sense, that wondrous Courtship of the sharp-tempered, oft-widowed Alice Green may pass, questionable, yet with a certain air of soot-stained genuineness. And so has, not a Picture, indeed, yet a sort of genial Study or Cartoon come together for him: and may endure there, after some flary oil-daubings, which we have seen framed with gilding, and hung-up in proud galleries, have become rags and rubbish.

To one class of readers especially, such Books as these ought to be interesting: to the highest, that is to say, the richest class. Among our Aristocracy, there are men, we trust there are many men, who feel that they also are workmen, born to toil, ever in their great Taskmaster's eye, faithfully with heart and head for those that with heart and hand do, under the same great Taskmaster, toil for them;—who have even this noblest and hardest work set before them: To deliver out of that Egyptian bondage to Wretchedness, and Ignorance, and Sin, the hardhanded millions; of whom this hardhanded earnest witness and writer is here representative. To such men his writing will be as a Document, which they will lovingly interpret: what is dark and exasperated and acrid, in their humble Brother, they for themselves will enlighten and sweeten; taking thankfully what is the real purport of his message, and laying it earnestly to heart. Might an instructive relation and interchange between High and Low at length ground itself, and more and more perfect itself,—to the unspeakable profit of all parties; for if all parties are to love and help one another, the first step towards this is, that all thoroughly understand

one another! To such rich men an authentic message from the hearts of poor men, from the heart of one poor man, will be welcome.

To another class of our Aristocracy, again, who unhappily feel rather that they are *not* workmen; and profess not so much to bear any burden, as to be themselves, with utmost attainable *steadiness*, and if possible *gracefulness*, borne, —such a phenomenon as this of the Sheffield Corn-Law Rhymer, with a Manchester Detrosier, and much else, pointing the same way, will be quite unwelcome; indeed, to the clearer-sighted, astonishing and alarming. It indicates that they find themselves, as Napoleon was wont to say, ‘in a new position;’—a position wonderful enough; of extreme singularity, to which, in the whole course of History, there is perhaps but one case in some measure parallel. The case alluded to stands recorded in the *Book of Numbers*: the case of Balaam the son of Beor.

Truly, if we consider it, there are few passages more notable and pregnant in their way, than this of Balaam. The Midianitish Soothsayer (Truth-speaker, or as we should now say, Counsel-giver and Senator) is journeying forth, as he has from of old quite prosperously done, in the way of his vocation; not so much to ‘curse the people of the Lord,’ as to earn for himself a comfortable penny by such means as are possible and expedient; something, it is hoped, midway between cursing and blessing; which shall not, except in case of necessity, be either a curse or a blessing, or indeed be anything so much as a Nothing that will look like a Something and bring wages in. For the man is not dishonest; far from it: still less is he honest; but above all things, he is, has been and will be, respectable. Did calumny ever dare to fasten itself on the fair fame of Balaam? In his whole walk and conversation, has he not shown consistency enough; ever

doing and speaking the thing that was decent; with proper spirit maintaining his status; so that friend and opponent held him in respect, and he could defy the spiteful world to say on any occasion, *Herein* art thou a knave? And now as he jogs along, in official comfort, with brave official retinue, his heart filled with good things, his head with schemes for the Preservation of Game, the Suppression of Vice, and the Cause of Civil and Religious Liberty all over the World; — consider what a spasm, and life-clutching ice-taloned pang, must have shot through the brain and pericardium of Balaam, when his Ass not only on the sudden stood stock-still, defying spur and cudgel, but—*began to talk*, and that in a reasonable manner! Did not his face, elongating, collapse, and tremour occupy his joints? For the thin crust of Respectability has cracked asunder; and a bottomless preternatural Inane yawns under him instead. Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness: the spirit-stirring Vote, ear-piercing Hear; the big Speech that makes ambition virtue; soft Palm-greasing first of raptures, and Cheers that emulate sphere-music: Balaam's occupation's gone!—

As for our stout Corn-Law Rhymer, what can we say by way of valediction but this, “Well done; come again, doing better”? Advices enough there were; but all lie included under one: To keep his eyes open, and do honestly whatsoever his hand shall find to do. We have praised him for sincerity: let him become more and more sincere; casting out all remnants of Hearsay, Imitation, ephemeral Speculation; resolutely ‘*clearing* his mind of Cant.’ We advised a wider course of reading: would he forgive us if we now suggested the question, Whether Rhyme is the only dialect he can write in; whether Rhyme is, after all, the natural or fittest dialect for him? In good Prose, which differs inconceivably from bad Prose, what may not be written, what

may not be read; from a Waverley Novel to an Arabic Koran, to an English Bible! Rhyme has plain advantages; which, however, are often purchased too dear. If the inward thought *can* speak itself, instead of sing itself, let it, especially in these quite unmusical days, do the former! In any case, if the inward Thought do not sing itself, that singing of the outward Phrase is a timber-toned false matter we could well dispense with. Will our Rhymer consider himself, then; and decide for what is actually best. Rhyme, up to this hour, never seems altogether obedient to him; and disobedient Rhyme,—who would ride on *it* that had once learned walking!

He takes amiss that some friends have admonished him to quit Politics: we will not repeat that admonition. Let him, on this as on all other matters, take solemn counsel with his own Socrates'-Demon; such as dwells in every mortal; such as he is a happy mortal who can hear the voice of, follow the behests of, like an unalterable law. At the same time, we could truly wish to see such a mind as his engaged rather in considering what, in his own sphere, could be *done*, than what, in his own or other spheres, ought to be *destroyed*; rather in producing or preserving the True, than in mangling and slashing asunder the False. Let him be at ease: the False is already dead, or lives only with a mock life. The death-sentence of the False was of old, from the first beginning of it, written in Heaven; and is now proclaimed in the Earth, and read aloud at all market-crosses; nor are innumerable volunteer tipstaves and headsmen wanting, to execute the same: for which needful service men inferior to him may suffice. Why should the heart of the Corn-Law Rhymer be troubled? Spite of 'Bread-tax,' he and his brave children, who will emulate their sire, have yet bread: the Workhouse, as we rejoice to fancy, has

receded into the safe distance; and is now quite shut-out from his poetic pleasure-ground. Why should he afflict himself with devices of 'Boroughmongering gowls,' or the rage of the Heathen imagining a vain thing? This matter, which he calls Corn-Law, will not have completed itself, adjusted itself into clearness, for the space of a century or two: nay after twenty centuries, what will there, or can there be for the son of Adam but Work, Work, two hands quite *full* of Work! Meanwhile, is not the Corn-Law Rhymer already a king, though a belligerent one; king of his own mind and faculty; and what man in the long-run is king of more? Not one in the thousand, even among sceptred kings, is king of so much. Be diligent in business, then; fervent in spirit. Above all things, lay aside anger, uncharitableness, hatred, noisy tumult; avoid them, as worse than Pestilence, worse than 'Bread-tax' itself:

For it well beseemeth kings, all mortals it beseemeth well,
To possess their souls in patience, and await what can betide.

ON HISTORY AGAIN.

ON HISTORY AGAIN.¹

[1833.]

[The following singular Fragment on *History* forms part, as may be recognised, of the Inaugural Discourse delivered by our assiduous 'D. T.' at the opening of the *Society for the Diffusion of Common Honesty*. The Discourse, if one may credit the Morning Papers, 'touched in the most wonderful manner, didactically, poetically, 'almost prophetically, on all things in this world and the next, 'in a strain of sustained or rather of suppressed passionate eloquence rarely witnessed in Parliament or out of it: the chief 'bursts were received with profound silence,'—interrupted, we fear, by snuff-taking. As will be seen, it is one of the didactic passages that we introduce here. The Editor of this Magazine is responsible for its accuracy, and publishes, if not with leave given, then with leave taken.—O. Y.]

* * * HISTORY recommends itself as the most profitable of all studies: and truly, for such a being as Man, who is born, and has to learn and work, and then after a measured term of years to depart, leaving descendants and performances, and so, in all ways, to vindicate himself as vital portion of a Mankind, no study could be fitter. History is the Letter of Instructions, which the old generations write and posthumously transmit to the new; nay it may be called, more

¹ FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 41.

generally still, the Message, verbal or written, which all Mankind delivers to every man; it is the only *articulate* communication (when the inarticulate and mute, intelligible or not, lie round us and in us, so strangely through every fibre of our being, every step of our activity) which the Past can have with the Present, the Distant with what is Here. All Books, therefore, were they but Song-books or treatises on Mathematics, are in the long-run historical documents—as indeed all Speech itself is: [thus might we say, History is not only the fittest study, but the only study, and includes all others whatsoever.] The Perfect in History, he who understood, and saw and knew within himself, *all* that the whole Family of Adam had hitherto *been* and hitherto *done*, were perfect in all learning extant or possible; needed not thenceforth to *study* any more; had thenceforth nothing left but to *be* and to *do* something himself, that others might make History of it, and learn of *him*.

Perfection in any kind is well known not to be the lot of man: but of all supernatural perfect-characters this of the Perfect in History (so easily conceivable, too) were perhaps the most miraculous. Clearly a faultless monster which the world is not to see, not even on paper. Had the Wandering Jew, indeed, begun to wander at Eden, and with a Fortunatus's Hat on his head! Nanac Shah too, we remember, steeped himself three days in some sacred Well; and there learnt all things: Nanac's was a far easier method; but unhappily not practicable—in this climate. Consider, however, at what immeasurable distance from this perfect Nanac your highest imperfect Gibbons play their part! Were there no brave men, thinkest thou, before Agamemnon? Beyond the Thracian Bosphorus, was all dead and void; from Cape Horn to Nova Zembla, round the whole habitable Globe, not a mouse stirring? Or, again, in reference to Time:—the

Creation of the World is indeed old, compare it to the Year One; yet young, of yesterday, compare it to Eternity! Alas, all Universal History is but a sort of Parish History; which the 'P. P. Clerk of this Parish,' member of 'our Ale-house Club' (instituted for what 'Psalmody' is in request there) puts together,—in such sort as his fellow-members will praise. Of the *thing* now gone silent, named Past, which was once Present, and loud enough, how much do we know? Our 'Letter of Instructions' comes to us in the saddest state; falsified, blotted out, torn, lost and but a shred of it in existence; this too so difficult to read or spell.

Unspeakably precious meanwhile is our shred of a Letter, is our written or spoken Message, such as we have it. Only he who understands what has been, can know what should be and will be. It is of the last importance that the individual have ascertained his relation to the whole; 'an individual helps not,' it has been written; 'only he who unites with many at the proper hour.' How easy, in a sense, for your all-instructed Nanac to work without waste or force (or what we call fault); and, in practice, act new History, as perfectly as, in theory, he knew the old! Comprehending what the given world was, what it had and what it wanted, how might his clear effort strike-in at the right time and the right point; wholly increasing the true current and tendency, nowhere cancelling itself in opposition thereto! Unhappily, such smooth-running, ever-accelerated course is nowise the one appointed us; cross-currents we have, perplexed back-floods; innumerable efforts (every new man is a new effort) consume themselves in aimless eddies: thus is the River of Existence so wild-flowing, wasteful; and whole multitudes, and whole generations, in painful unreason, spend and are spent on what can never profit. Of all which, does not one-half originate in this which we have

named want of Perfection in History;—the other half, indeed, in another want still deeper, still more irremediable?

Here, however, let us grant that Nature, in regard to such historic want, is nowise blamable: taking up the other face of the matter, let us rather admire the pains she has been at, the truly magnificent provision she has made, that this same Message of Instructions might reach us in boundless plenitude. Endowments, faculties enough, we have: it is her wise will too that no faculty imparted to us shall rust from disuse; the miraculous faculty of Speech, once given, becomes not more a gift than a necessity; the Tongue, with or without much meaning, will keep in motion; and only in some *La Trappe* by unspeakable self-restraint forbear wagging. As little can the fingers that have learned the miracle of Writing lie idle; if there is a rage of speaking, we know also there is a rage of writing, perhaps the more furious of the two. It is said, ‘so eager are men to speak, they will not let one another get to speech;’ but, on the other hand, writing is usually transacted in private, and every man has his own desk and inkstand, and sits independent and unrestrainable there. Lastly, multiply this power of the Pen some ten-thousandfold: that is to say, invent the Printing-Press, with its Printer’s Devils, with its Editors, Contributors, Booksellers, Billstickers, and see what it will do! Such are the means wherewith Nature, and Art the daughter of Nature, have equipped their favourite Man, for publishing himself to man.

Consider, now, two things: first, that one Tongue, of average velocity, will publish at the rate of a thick octavo volume per day; and then how many nimble-enough Tongues may be supposed to be at work on this Planet Earth, in this City London, at this hour! Secondly, that a Literary Contributor, if in good heart and urged by hunger, will many

times, as we are credibly informed, accomplish his two Magazine sheets within the four-and-twenty hours; such Contributors being now numerable not by the thousand, but by the million. Nay, taking History, in its narrower, vulgar sense, as the mere chronicle of ‘occurrences,’ of things that can be, as we say, ‘narrated,’ our calculation is still but a little altered. Simple Narrative, it will be observed, is the grand staple of Speech; ‘the common man,’ says Jean Paul, ‘is copious in Narrative, exiguous in Reflection; only with ‘the cultivated man is it otherwise, reversewise.’ Allow even the thousandth part of human publishing for the emission of Thought, though perhaps the millionth were enough, we have still the nine hundred and ninety-nine employed in History proper, in relating occurrences, or conjecturing probabilities of such; that is to say, either in History or Prophecy, which is a new form of History:—and so the reader can judge with what abundance this life-breath of the human intellect is furnished in our world; whether Nature has been stingy to him or munificent. Courage, reader! Never can the historical inquirer want pabulum, better or worse: are there not forty-eight longitudinal feet of small-printed History in thy Daily Newspaper?

The truth is, if Universal History is such a miserable defective ‘shred’ as we have named it, the fault lies not in our historic organs, but wholly in our misuse of these; say rather, in so many wants and obstructions, varying with the various age, that pervert our right use of them; especially two wants that press heavily in all ages: want of Honesty, want of Understanding. If the thing published is not true, is only a supposition, or even a wilful invention, what can be done with it, except abolish it and annihilate it? But again, Truth, says Horne Tooke, means simply the thing *trowed*, the thing believed; and now, from this to the thing

itself, what a new fatal deduction have we to suffer! Without Understanding, Belief itself will profit little: and how can your publishing avail, when there was no vision in it, but mere blindness? For as in political appointments, the man you appoint is not he who was ablest to discharge the duty, but only he who was ablest to be appointed; so too, in all historic elections and selections, the maddest work goes on. The event worthiest to be known is perhaps of all others the least spoken of: nay, some say, it lies in the very nature of such events to be so. Thus, in those same forty-eight longitudinal feet of History, or even when they have stretched out into forty-eight longitudinal miles, of the like quality, there may not be the forty-eighth part of a hairsbreadth that will turn to anything. Truly, in these times, the quantity of printed Publication that will need to be consumed with fire, before the smallest permanent advantage can be drawn from it, might fill us with astonishment, almost with apprehension. Where, alas, is the intrepid Herculean Dr. Wagtail, that will reduce all these paper-mountains into tinder, and extract therefrom the three drops of Tinder-water Elixir?

For indeed, looking at the activity of the historic Pen and Press through this last half-century, and what bulk of History it yields for that period alone, and how it is henceforth like to increase in decimal or vigesimal geometric progression,—one might feel as if a day were not distant, when perceiving that the whole Earth would not now contain those writings of what was done in the Earth, the human memory must needs sink confounded, and cease remembering!—To some the reflection may be new and consolatory, that this state of ours is not so unexampled as it seems; that with memory and things memorable the case was always intrinsically similar. The Life of Nero occupies

some diamond pages of our Tacitus: but in the parchment and papyrus archives of Nero's generation how many did it fill? The author of the *Vie de Sénèque*, at this distance, picking-up a few residuary snips, has with ease made two octavos of it. On the other hand, were the contents of the then extant Roman memories, or, going to the utmost length, were all that was then *spoken* on it, put in types, how many 'longitudinal feet' of small-pica had we,—in belts that would go round the Globe!

History, then, before it can become Universal History, needs of all things to be compressed. Were there no epitomising of History, one could not remember beyond a week. Nay, go to that with it, and exclude compression altogether, we could not remember an hour, or at all: for Time, like Space, is *infinitely* divisible; and an hour with its events, with its sensations and emotions, might be diffused to such expansion as should cover the whole field of memory, and push all else over the limits. Habit, however, and the natural constitution of man, do themselves prescribe serviceable rules for remembering; and keep at a safe distance from us all such fantastic possibilities;—into which only some foolish Mahomedan Caliph, ducking his head in a bucket of enchanted water, and so beating-out one wet minute into seven long years of servitude and hardship, could fall. The rudest peasant has his complete set of Annual Registers legibly printed in his brain; and, without the smallest training in Mnemonics, the proper pauses, subdivisions and subordinations of the little to the great, all introduced there. Memory and Oblivion, like Day and Night, and indeed like all other Contradictions in this strange dualistic Life of ours, are necessary for each other's existence: Oblivion is the dark page, whereon Memory writes her light-beam characters, and makes them legible; were it all light,

nothing could be read there, any more than if it were all darkness.

As with man and these autobiographic Annual-Registers of his, so goes it with Mankind and its Universal History, which also is *its* Autobiography: a like unconscious talent of remembering and of forgetting again does the work here. The transactions of the day, were they never so noisy, cannot remain loud forever; the morrow comes with its new noises, claiming also to be registered: in the immeasurable conflict and concert of this chaos of existence, figure after figure sinks, as *all* that has emerged must one day sink: what cannot be kept in mind will even go out of mind; History contracts itself into readable extent; and at last, in the hands of some Bossuet or Müller, the whole printed History of the World, from the Creation downwards, has grown shorter than that of the Ward of Portsoken for one solar day.

Whether such contraction and epitome is always wisely formed, might admit of question; or rather, as we say, admits of no question. Scandalous Cleopatras and Messalinas, Caligulas and Commoduses, in unprofitable proportion, survive for memory; while a scientific Pancirollus has to write his Book of Arts Lost; and a moral Pancirollus, were the vision lent him, might write a still more mournful Book of Virtues Lost; of noble men, doing and daring and enduring, whose heroic life, as a new revelation and development of Life itself, were a possession for all, but is now lost and forgotten, History having otherwise filled her page. In fact, here as elsewhere, what we call Accident governs much; in any case, History must come together not as it should, but as it can and will.

Remark nevertheless how, by natural tendency alone, and as it were without man's forethought, a certain fitness

of selection, and this even to a high degree, becomes inevitable. Wholly worthless the selection could not be, were there no better rule than this to guide it: that men permanently speak only of what is extant and actively alive beside them. Thus do the things that have produced fruit, nay whose fruit still grows, turn out to be the things chosen for record and writing of; which things alone were great, and worth recording. The Battle of Châlons, where Hunland met Rome, and the Earth was played for, at sword-fence, by two earth-bestridding giants, the sweep of whose swords cut kingdoms in pieces, hovers dim in the languid remembrance of a few; while the poor police-court Treachery of a wretched Iscariot, transacted in the wretched land of Palestine, centuries earlier, for 'thirty pieces of silver,' lives clear in the heads, in the hearts of all men. Nay moreover, as only that which bore fruit was great; so of all things, that whose fruit is still here and growing must be the greatest, the best worth remembering; which again, as we see, by the very nature of the case, is mainly the thing remembered. Observe, too, how this 'mainly' tends always to become a 'solely,' and the approximate continually approaches nearer: for triviality after triviality, as it perishes from the living activity of men, drops away from their speech and memory, and the great and vital more and more exclusively survive there. Thus does Accident correct Accident; and in the wondrous boundless jostle of things (an aimful POWER presiding over it, say rather, dwelling *in* it), a result comes out that may be put-up with.

Curious, at all events, and worth looking at once in our life, is this same compressure of History, be the process thereof what it may. How the 'forty-eight longitudinal feet' have shrunk together after a century, after ten centuries! Look back from end to beginning, over any History;

over our own *England*: how, in rapidest law of perspective, it dwindles from the canvas! An unhappy Sybarite, if we stand within two centuries of him and name him Charles Second, shall have twelve times the space of a heroic Alfred; two or three thousand times, if we name him George the Fourth. The whole Saxon Heptarchy, though events, to which Magna Charta, and the world-famous Third Reading, are as dust in the balance, took place then,—for did not England, to mention nothing else, get itself, if not represented in Parliament, yet converted to Christianity?—the whole Saxon Heptarchy, I say, is summed-up practically in that one sentence of Milton's, the only one succeeding writers have copied, or readers remembered, of the 'fighting and flocking of kites and crows.' Neither was that an unimportant wassail-night, when the two black-browed Brothers, strongheaded, headstrong, Hengst and Horsa (*Stallion* and *Horse*), determined on a man-hunt in Britain, the boar-hunt at home having got over-crowded; and so, of a few hungry Angles made an English Nation, and planted it here, and—produced *thee*, O Reader! Of Hengst's whole campaignings scarcely half a page of good Narrative can now be written; the *Lord Mayor's Visit to Oxford* standing, meanwhile, revealed to mankind in a respectable volume. Nay what of this? Does not the Destruction of a Brunswick Theatre take above a million times as much telling as the Creation of a World?

To use a ready-made similitude, we might liken Universal History to a magic web; and consider with astonishment how, by philosophic insight and indolent neglect, the ever-growing fabric wove itself forward, out of that ravelled immeasurable mass of threads and thrums, which we name *Memoirs*; nay, at each new lengthening, at each new *epoch*, changed its whole proportions, its hue and structure to the

very origin. Thus, do not the records of a Tacitus acquire new meaning, after seventeen hundred years, in the hands of a Montesquieu? Niebuhr has to reinterpret for us, at a still greater distance, the writings of a Titus Livius: nay, the religious archaic chronicles of a Hebrew Prophet and Lawgiver escape not the like fortune; and many a ponderous Eichhorn scans, with new-ground philosophic spectacles, the revelation of a Moses, and strives to reproduce for this century what, thirty centuries ago, was of plainly infinite significance to all. Consider History with the beginnings of it stretching dimly into the remote Time; emerging darkly out of the mysterious Eternity: the ends of it enveloping *us* at this hour, whereof we at this hour, both as actors and relators, form part! In shape we might mathematically name it *Hyperbolic-Asymptotic*; ever of *infinite* breadth around us; soon shrinking within narrow limits: ever narrowing more and more into the infinite depth behind us. In essence and significance it has been called ‘the true Epic Poem, and universal Divine Scripture, *whose* “ple-
‘nary inspiration” no man, out of Bedlam or in it, shall
‘bring in question.’

* * * * *

DIDEROT.

DIDEROT.¹

[1833.]

THE *Acts* of the *Christian Apostles*, on which, as we may say, the world has, now for eighteen centuries, had its foundation, are written in so small a compass, that they can be read in one little hour. The *Acts* of the *French Philosophes*, the importance of which is already fast exhausting itself, lie recorded in whole acres of typography, and would furnish reading for a lifetime. Nor is the stock, as we see, yet any-wise complete, or within computable distance of completion. Here are Four quite new Octavos, recording the labours, voyages, victories, amours and indigestions of the Apostle Denis: it is but a year or two since a new contribution on Voltaire came before us; since Jean Jacques had a new *Life* written for him; and then of those *Feuilles de Grimm*, what incalculable masses may yet lie dormant in the Petersburg Library, waiting only to be awakened and let slip!—Reading for a lifetime? Thomas Parr might begin reading in long-clothes, and stop in his last hundred and fiftieth year without having ended. And then, as to when the process of

¹ FOREIGN QUARTERLY REVIEW, No. 22. — 1. *Mémoires, Correspondance et Ouvrages inédits de Diderot; publiés d'après les manuscrits confiés, en mourant, par l'auteur à Grimm.* 4 tom. 8vo. Paris (Paulin, Libraire-Editeur), 1831.

2. *Œuvres de Denis Diderot; précédées de Mémoires historiques et philosophiques sur sa Vie et ses Ouvrages, par J. A. Naigeon.* 22 tom. 8vo. Paris (Brière), 1821.

addition will cease, and the Acts and Epistles of the Parisian Church of Antichrist will have completed themselves; except in so far as the quantity of paper written on, or even manufactured, in those days, being finite and not infinite, the business one day or other must cease, and the Antichristian Canon close for the last time,—we yet know nothing.

Meanwhile, let us nowise be understood as lamenting this stupendous copiousness, but rather as viewing it historically with patience, and indeed with satisfaction. Memoirs, so long as they are true, how stupid soever, can hardly be accumulated in excess. The stupider they are, let them simply be the sooner cast into the oven; if true, they will always instruct more or less, were it only in the way of confirmation and repetition; and, what is of vast moment, they do not *misinstruct*. Day after day looking at the high destinies which yet await Literature, which Literature will ere long address herself with more decisiveness than ever to fulfil, it grows clearer to us that the proper task of Literature lies in the domain of BELIEF; within which ‘Poetic Fiction,’ as it is charitably named, will have to take a quite new figure, if allowed a settlement there. Whereby were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of Novel-writers and suchlike, must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things: either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors and semifatuous persons of both sexes; or else, what were far better, sweep their Novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake them with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is *true*,—of which, surely, there is, and will forever be, a whole Infinitude unknown to us, of infinite importance to us! Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher Knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons) Reality. The Thinker is the Poet, the Seer:

let him who *sees* write down according to his gift of sight; if deep and with inspired vision, then creatively, poetically; if common, and with only uninspired everyday vision, let him at least be faithful in this and write *Memoirs*.

On us still so near at hand, that Eighteenth Century in Paris presenting itself nowise as portion of the magic web of Universal History, but only as the confused and ravelled mass of threads and thrums, ycleped *Memoirs*, in process of *being* woven into such,—imposes a rather complex relation. Of which, however, as of all such, the leading rules may be happily comprised in this very plain one, prescribed by Nature herself: to search in them, so far as they seem worthy, for whatsoever can help us forward on our own path, were it in the shape of intellectual instruction, of moral edification, nay of mere solacement and amusement. The Bourbons, indeed, took a shorter method (the like of which has been often recommended elsewhere): they shut-up and hid the *graves* of the Philosophes, hoping that their lives and writings might likewise thereby go out of sight and out of mind; and thus the whole business would be, so to speak, *suppressed*. Foolish Bourbons! These things were not done in a corner, but on high places, before the anxious eyes of all mankind: hidden they can in nowise be: to conquer them, to resist them, our first indispensable preliminary is to see and comprehend them. To us, indeed, as their immediate successors, the right comprehension of them is of prime necessity; for, sent of God or of the Devil, they have plainly enough gone before us, and left us such and such a world: it is on ground of their tillage, with the stubble of their harvest standing on it, that we now have to plough. Before all things, then, let us understand what ground it is; what manner of men and husbandmen these were. For which reason, be all authentic Philosophe-Memoirs welcome, each

in its kind! For which reason, let us now, without the smallest reluctance, penetrate into this wondrous Gospel according to Denis Diderot, and expatiate there, to see whether it will yield us aught.

In any phenomenon, one of the most important moments is the *end*. Now this epoch of the Eighteenth or Philosophic-century was properly the End; the End of a Social System which for above a thousand years had been building itself together, and, after that, had begun, for some centuries (as human things all do), to moulder down. The mouldering-down of a Social System is no cheerful business either to form part of, or to look at: however, at length, in the course of it, there comes a time when the mouldering changes into a rushing; active hands drive-in their wedges, set-to their crowbars; there is a comfortable appearance of work going on. Instead of here and there a stone falling out, here and there a handful of dust, whole masses tumble down, whole clouds and whirlwinds of dust: torches too are applied, and the rotten easily takes fire: so, what with flame-whirlwind, what with dust-whirlwind, and the crash of falling towers, the concern grows eminently interesting; and our assiduous craftsmen can encourage one another with *Vivats*, and cries of *Speed the work*. Add to this, that of all labourers, no one can see such rapid extensive fruit of his labour as the Destroyer can and does: it will not seem unreasonable that measuring from effect to cause, he should esteem his labour as the best and greatest; and a Voltaire, for example, be by his guild-brethren and apprentices confidently accounted ‘not only the greatest man of this age, but of all past ages, and perhaps the greatest that Nature could produce.’ Worthy old Nature! She goes on producing whatsoever is needful in each season of her course; and produces, with

perfect composure, that Encyclopedist opinion, that she can produce no more.

Such a torch-and-crowbar period, of quick rushing-down and conflagration, was this of the *Siècle de Louis Quinze*; when the Social System having all fallen into rottenness, rain-holes and noisome decay, the shivering natives resolved to cheer their dull abode by the questionable step of setting it on fire. Questionable we call their manner of procedure; the thing itself, as all men may now see, was inevitable; one way or other, whether by prior burning or milder methods, the old house must needs be new-built. We behold the business of pulling down, or at least of assorting the rubbish, still go resolutely on, all over Europe: here and there some traces of new foundation, of new building-up, may now also, to the eye of Hope, disclose themselves.

To get acquainted with Denis Diderot and his life were to see the significant epitome of all this, as it works on the thinking and acting soul of a man, fashions for him a singular element of existence, gives himself therein a peculiar hue and figure. Unhappily, after all that has been written, the matter still is not luminous: to us strangers, much in that foreign economy, and method of working and living, remains obscure; much in the man himself, and his inward nature and structure. But indeed, it is several years since the present Reviewer gave up the idea of what could be called *understanding* any man whatever, even himself. Every Man, within that inconsiderable figure of his, contains a whole Spirit-kingdom and Reflex of the ALL; and, though to the eye but some six standard feet in size, reaches downwards and upwards, unsurveyable, fading into the regions of Immensity and of Eternity. Life everywhere, as woven on that stupendous ever-marvellous 'Loom of Time,' may be said to fashion itself of a woof of light, indeed, yet on a warp

of mystic darkness: only He that created it can understand it. As to this Diderot, had we once got so far that we could, in the faintest degree, personate him; take upon ourselves his character and his environment of circumstances, and act his Life over again, in that small Private-Theatre of ours (under our own Hat), with moderate illusiveness and histrionic effect,—*that* were what, in conformity with common speech, we should name *understanding* him, and could be abundantly content with.

In his manner of appearance before the world, Diderot has been, perhaps to an extreme degree, unfortunate. His literary productions were invariably dashed-off in hottest haste, and left generally on the waste of Accident, with an ostrich-like indifference. He had to live, in France, in the sour days of a *Journal de Trevoux*; of a suspicious, decaying Sorbonne. He was too poor to set foreign presses, at Kehl or elsewhere, in motion; too headlong and quick of temper to seek help from those that could: thus must he, if his pen was not to lie idle, write much of which there was no publishing. His Papers accordingly are found flying about, like Sibyl's leaves, in all corners of the world: for many years no tolerable Collection of his Writings was attempted; to this day there is none that in any sense can be called perfect. Two spurious, surreptitious Amsterdam Editions, 'or rather formless, blundering Agglomerations,' were all that the world saw during his life. Diderot did not hear of these for several years, and then only, it is said, 'with peals of laughter,' and no other practical step whatever. Of the four that have since been printed (or *reprinted*, for Naisgeon's, of 1798, is the great original), no one so much as pretends either to be complete, or selected on any system. Brière's, the latest, of which alone we have much personal knowledge, is a well-printed book, perhaps better worth buying

than any of the others; yet without arrangement, without coherence, purport; often lamentably in need of commentary; on the whole, in reference to the wants and specialties of this time, as good as *unedited*. Brière seems, indeed, to have hired some person, or thing, to play the part of Editor; or rather more things than one, for they sign themselves Editors in the plural number; and from time to time, throughout the work, some asterisk attracts us to the bottom of the leaf, and to some printed matter subscribed 'EDIT^s.' but unhappily the journey is for most part in vain; in the course of a volume or two, we learn too well that nothing is to be gained there; that the Note, whatever it professedly treat of, will, in strict logical speech, mean only as much as to say: 'Reader! thou perceivest that we Editors, 'to the number of at least two, are alive, and if we had 'any information would impart it to thee.—EDIT^s.' For the rest, these 'EDIT^s.' are polite people; and with this uncertainty (as to their being persons or things) clearly before them, continue, to all appearance, in moderately good spirits.

One service they, or Brière for them (if, indeed, Brière is not himself they, as we sometimes surmise), have accomplished for us: sought out and printed the long-looked-for, long-lost *Life of Diderot* by Naigeon. The lovers of biography had for years sorrowed over this concealed Manuscript, with a wistfulness from which hope had nigh fled. A certain Naigeon, the beloved disciple of Diderot, had (if his own word, in his own editorial Preface, was to be credited) written a Life of him; and, alas! whither was it now vanished? Surely all that was dark in Denis the Fatalist had there been illuminated: nay, was there not, probably, a glorious 'Light-Street' carried through that whole Literary Eighteenth Century? And was not Diderot, long belauded as 'the most encyclopedical head that

perhaps ever existed,' now to show himself as such, in—the new Practical Encyclopedia, philosophic, economic, speculative, digestive, of LIFE, in threescore and ten Years, or Volumes? Diderot too was known as the vividest, noblest talker of his time: considering all that Boswell, with his slender opportunities, had made of Johnson, what was there we had not a right to expect!

By Brière's endeavour, as we said, the concealed Manuscript of Naigeon now lies, as published Volume, on this desk. Alas, a written *life*, too like many an acted life, where hope is one thing, fulfilment quite another! Perhaps, indeed, of all biographies ever put together by the hand of man, this of Naigeon's is the most uninteresting. Foolish Naigeon! We wanted to see and know how it stood with the bodily man, the clothed, boarded, bedded, working and warfaring Denis Diderot, in that Paris of his; how he looked and lived, what he did, what he said: had the foolish Biographer so much as told us what colour his stockings were! Of all this, beyond a date or two, not a syllable, not a hint; nothing but a dull, sulky, snuffing, droning, interminable lecture on Atheistic Philosophy; how Diderot came upon Atheism, how he taught it, how true it is, how inexpressibly important. Singular enough, the zeal of *the devil's* house had eaten Naigeon up. A man of coarse, mechanical, perhaps intrinsically rather feeble intellect; and then, with the vehemence of some pulpit-drumming 'Gowkthrapple,' or 'precious Mr. Jabesh Rentowel,'—only that *his* kirk is of the *other* complexion! Yet must he too see himself in a wholly backsliding world, where much theism and other scandal still rules; and many times Gowkthrapple Naigeon be tempted to weep by the streams of Babel. Withal, however, he is *wooden*; thoroughly mechanical, as in Vaucanson himself had made him; and that singularly

tempers his fury. Let the reader, finally, admire the bounteous produce of this Earth, and how one element bears nothing but the other matches it: here have we not the truest *odium theologicum*, working quite *demonologically*, in a worshipper of the Everlasting Nothing! So much for Naigeon; what we looked for from him, and what we have got.

Must Diderot, then, be given up to oblivion, or remembered not as Man, but merely as Philosophic-Atheistic Logic-Mill? Did not Diderot live, as well as think? An Amateur reporter in some of the Biographical Dictionaries declares that he heard him talk one day, in nightgown and slippers, for the space of two hours, concerning earth, sea and air, with a fulgorous impetuosity almost beyond human, rising from height to height, and at length finish the climax by ‘dashing his nightcap against the wall.’ Most readers will admit this to be biography: we, alas, must say, it comprises nearly all about the Man Diderot that hitherto would abide with us.

Here, however, comes ‘Paulin, Publishing-Bookseller,’ with a quite new contribution: a long series of Letters, extending over fifteen years; unhappily only love-letters, and from a married sexagenarian; yet still letters from his own hand. Amid these insipid floods of *tendresse*, *sensibilité* and so forth, vapid, like long-decanted small-beer, many a curious biographic trait comes to light; indeed, we can hereby see more of the individual Diderot, and his environment, and method of procedure there, than by all the other books that have yet been published of him. Forgetting or conquering the species of nausea that such a business, on the first announcement of it, may occasion, and in many of the details of it cannot but confirm, the biographic reader will find this well worth looking into. Nay, is it not something, of itself, to see that Spectacle of the Philosophe in Love, or at least

zealously endeavouring to fancy himself so? For scientific purposes a considerable tedium, of 'noble sentiment,' and even worse things, can be undergone. How the most encyclopedical head that perhaps ever existed, now on the borders of his grand climacteric, and already provided with wife and child, comports himself in that trying circumstance of preternuptial (and indeed, at such age, and with so many 'indigestions,' almost preternatural) devotion to the queens of this earth, may, by the curious in science, who have nerves for it, be here seen. There is besides a lively *Memoir* of him by Mademoiselle Diderot, though too brief, and not very true-looking. Finally, in one large Volume, his *Dream of d'Alembert*, greatly regretted and commented upon by Naigeon; which we could have done without. For its bulk, that little *Memoir* by Mademoiselle is the best of the whole. Unfortunately, indeed, as hinted, Mademoiselle, resolute of all things to be *piquante*, writes, or rather *thinks*, in a smart, antithetic manner, nowise the fittest for clearness or credibility: without suspicion of voluntary falsehood, there is no appearance that this is a camera-lucida picture, or a portrait drawn by legitimate rules of art. Such resolution to be piquant is the besetting sin of innumerable persons of both sexes, and wofully mars any use there might otherwise be in their writing or their speaking. It is, or was, the fault specially imputed to the French: in a woman and Frenchwoman, who besides has much to tell us, it must even be borne with. And now, from these diverse scattered materials, let us try how coherent a figure of Denis Diderot, and his earthly Pilgrimage and Performance, we can piece together.

In the ancient Town of Langres, in the month of October 1713, it begins. Fancy Langres, aloft on its hill-top, amid

Roman ruins, nigh the sources of the Saone and of the Marne, with its coarse substantial houses, and fifteen thousand inhabitants, mostly engaged in knife-grinding; and one of the quickest, clearest, most volatile and susceptible little figures of that century, just landed in the World there. In this French Sheffield, Diderot's Father was a Cutler, master of his craft; a much-respected and respect-worthy man; one of those ancient craftsmen (now, alas! nearly departed from the earth, and sought, with little effect, by idylists, among the 'Scottish peasantry' and elsewhere) who, in the school of practice, have learned not only skill of hand, but the far harder skill of head and of heart; whose whole knowledge and virtue, being by necessity a knowledge and virtue to *do* somewhat, is true, and has stood trial: humble modern patriarchs, brave, wise, simple; of worth rude but unperturbed, like genuine unwrought silver, native from the mine! Diderot loved his father, as he well might, and regrets on several occasions that he was painted in holiday clothes, and not in the workday costume of his trade, 'with apron and grinder's-wheel, and spectacles pushed 'up,'—even as he lived and laboured, and honestly made good for himself the small section of the Universe he pretended to occupy. A man of strictest veracity and integrity was this ancient master; of great insight and patient discretion, so that he was often chosen as umpire and adviser; of great humanity, so that one day crowds of poor were to 'follow him with tears to his long home.' An outspoken Langres neighbour gratified the now fatherless Philosopher with this saying: 'Ah, Monsieur Diderot, you are a famous man, but you will never be your father's equal.' Truly, of all the wonderful illustrious persons that come to view in the biographic part of these six-and-twenty Volumes, it is a question whether this old Langres Cutler is not the wor-

thiest; to us no other suggests himself whose worth can be admitted, without lamentable pollutions and defacements to be deducted from it. The Mother also was a loving-hearted, just woman: so Diderot might account himself well-born; and it is a credit to the man that he always, were it in the circle of kings and empresses, gratefully did so.

The Jesuits were his schoolmasters: at the age of twelve the encyclopedical head was 'tonsured.' He was quick in seizing, strong in remembering and arranging; otherwise flighty enough; fond of sport, and from time to time getting into trouble. One grand event, significant of all this, he has himself commemorated; his Daughter records it in these terms:

'He had chanced to have a quarrel with his comrades: it had been serious enough to bring on him a sentence of exclusion from college on some day of public examination and distribution of prizes. The idea of passing this important time at home, and grieving his parents, was intolerable; he proceeded to the college-gate; the porter refused him admittance; he presses-in while some crowd is entering, and sets off running at full speed; the porter gets at him with a sort of pike he carried, and wounds him in the side: the boy will not be driven back; arrives, takes the place that belonged to him: prizes of all sorts, for composition, for memory, for poetry, he obtains them all. No doubt he had deserved them; since even the resolution to punish him could not withstand the sense of justice in his superiors. Several volumes, a number of garlands had fallen to his lot; being too weak to carry them all, he put the garlands round his neck, and with his arms full of books, returned home. His mother was at the door; and saw him coming through the public square in this equipment, and surrounded by his schoolfellows: one should be a mother to conceive what she must have felt. He was feasted, he was caressed: but next Sunday, in dressing him for church, a considerable wound was found on him, of which he had not so much as thought of complaining.'

'One of the sweetest moments of my life,' writes Diderot himself of this same business, with a slight variation, 'was more than thirty

years ago, and I remember it like yesterday, when my Father saw me coming home from the college, with my arms full of prizes that I had carried off, and my shoulders with the garlands they had given me, which, being too big for my brow, had let my head slip through them. Noticing me at a distance, he threw down his work, hastened to the door to meet me, and could not help weeping. It is a fine sight, a true man and rigorous falling to weep !

Mademoiselle, in her quick-sparkling way, informs us, nevertheless, that the school-victor, getting tired of pedagogic admonitions and inflictions, whereof there were many, said ‘one morning’ to his father, ‘that he meant to give up school’ !—“Thou hadst rather be a cutler, then?”—“With all my heart.”—They handed him an apron, and he placed himself beside his father. He spoiled whatever he laid hands on, penknives, whittles, blades of all kinds. It went on for four or five days; at the end of which he rose, proceeded to his room, got his books there, and returned to college,—and having, it would appear, in this simple manner sown his college wild-oats, never stirred from it again.

To the Reverend Fathers, it seemed that Denis would make an excellent Jesuit; wherefore they set about coaxing and courting, with intent to crimp him. Here, in some minds, a certain comfortable reflection on the diabolic cunning and assiduity of these Holy Fathers, now happily all dissolved and expelled, will suggest itself. Along with which, may another melancholy reflection, no less be in place: namely, that these Devil-serving Jesuits should have shown a skill and zeal in their teaching vocation, such as no Heaven-serving body, of what complexion soever, anywhere on our earth now exhibits. To decipher the talent of a young vague Capability, who must one day be a man and a Reality; to take him by the hand, and train him to a spiritual trade, and set him up in it, with tools, shop and

goodwill, were doing him in most cases an unspeakable service,—on this one proviso, it is true, that the trade be a just and honest one; in which proviso surely there should lie no hindrance to such service, but rather a help. Nay, could many a poor Dermody, Hazlitt, Heron, Derrick and suchlike, have been trained to be a good Jesuit, were it greatly worse than to have lived painfully as a bad Nothing-at-all? But indeed, as was said, the Jesuits are dissolved; and Corporations of all sorts have perished (from corpulence); and now, instead of the seven corporate selfish spirits, we have the four-and-twenty millions of discorporate selfish; and the rule, *Man, mind thyself*, makes a jumble and a scramble, and crushing press (with dead-pressed figures and dismembered limbs enough); into whose dark chaotic depths (for human Life is ever unfathomable) one shudders to look. Loneliest of all, weakest and worst-bested, in that world-scramble, is the extraordinary figure known in these times as Man of Letters! It appears to be indubitable that this state of matters will alter and improve itself,—in a century or two. But to return:

‘The Jesuits,’ thus sparkles Mademoiselle, ‘employed the temptation, which is always so seductive, of travelling and of liberty; they persuaded the youth to quit his home, and set forth with a Jesuit, to whom he was attached. Denis had a friend, a cousin of his own age; he intrusted his secret to him, wishing that he should accompany them. But the cousin, a tamer and discreeter personage, discovered the whole project to the father; the day of departure, the hour, all was betrayed. My grandfather kept the strictest silence; but before going to sleep he carried off the keys of the street-door; and at midnight, hearing his son descend, he presented himself before him, with the question, “Whither bound, at such an hour?” “To Paris,” replied the young man, “where I am to join the Jesuits.”—“That will not be tonight; but your desires shall be fulfilled: let us in the first place go to sleep.”

‘Next morning his father engaged two places in the public conveyance, and carried him to Paris, to the College d’Harcourt. He settled the terms of his little establishment, and bade his son good-b’ye. But the worthy man loved his child too well to leave him without being quite satisfied about his situation: he had the constancy to stay a fortnight longer, killing the time, and dying of tedium, in an inn, without seeing the sole object he was delaying for. At the end, he proceeded to the College; and my father has often told me that this proof of tenderness would have made him go to the end of the world, if the old man had required it. “Friend,” said he, “I am come to know if your health keeps good; if you are content with your superiors, with your diet, with others and with yourself. If you are not well, if you are not happy, we will go back again to your mother. If you like better to remain here, I have but to speak a word with you, to embrace you, and give you my blessing.” The youth assured him that he was perfectly content, that he liked his new abode very much. My grandfather then took leave of him, and went to the Principal, to know if he was satisfied with his pupil.’

On which side also the answer proving favourable, the worthy father returned home. Denis saw little more of him; never again residing under his roof; though for many years, and to the last, a proper intercourse was kept up; not, as appears, without a visit or two on the son’s part, and certainly with the most unwearied, prudent superintendence and assistance on the father’s. Indeed, it was a worthy family, that of the Diderots; and a fair degree of natural affection must be numbered among the virtues of our Philosopher. Those scenes about rural Langres, and the old homely way of life there, as delineated fictitiously in the *Entretien d’un Père avec ses Enfants*, and now more fully, as matter of fact, in this just-published *Correspondance*, are of a most innocent, cheerful, peacefully-secluded character; more pleasing, we might almost say more poetical, than could elsewhere be gathered out of Diderot’s whole Writings. Denis was the eldest of the family, and much looked up

to, with all his shortcomings: there was a Brother, who became a clergyman; and a true-hearted, sharp-witted Sister, who remained unmarried, and at times tried to live in partnership with this latter,—rather unsuccessfully. The Clergyman being a conscientious, even strait-laced man, and Denis such as we know, they had, naturally enough, their own difficulties to keep on brotherly terms; and indeed, at length abandoned the task as hopeless. The Abbé stood rigorous by his Breviary, from time to time addressing solemn monitions to the lost Philosophe, who also went on his way. He is somewhat snarled at by the Denisian side of the house for this; but surely without ground: it was his virtue rather; at lowest his destiny. The true Priest, who could, or should, look peaceably on an *Encyclopédie*, is yet perhaps waited for in the world; and of all false things, is not a false Priest the falsest?

Meanwhile Denis, at the College d'Harcourt, learns additional Greek and Mathematics, and quite loses taste for the Jesuit career. Mad pranks enough he played, we doubt not; followed by reprimands. He made several friends, however; got intimate with the Abbé Bernis, Poet at that time, afterwards Cardinal. 'They used to dine together, 'for six sous a-piece, at the neighbouring *Traiteur's*; and I 'have often heard him vaunt the gaiety of these repasts.'

'His studies being finished,' continues Mademoiselle, 'his father wrote to M. Clement de Ris, a Procureur at Paris, and his countryman, to take him as boarder, that he might study Jurisprudence and the Laws. He continued here two years; but the business of *actes* and *inventaires* had few charms for him. All the time he could steal from the office-desk was employed in prosecuting Latin and Greek, in which he thought himself still imperfect; Mathematics, which he to the last continued passionately fond of; Italian, English, &c. In the end he gave himself up so completely to his taste for letters, that M. Clement thought it right to inform his father how ill the youth

was employing his time. My grandfather then expressly commissioned M. Clement to urge and constrain him to make choice of some profession, and, once for all, to become Doctor, Procureur, or Advocate. My father begged time to think of it; time was given. At the end of several months these proposals were again laid before him: he answered, that the profession of Doctor did not please him, for he could not think of killing anybody; that the Procureur business was too difficult to execute with delicacy; that he would willingly choose the profession of Advocate, were it not that he felt an invincible repugnance to occupy himself all his life with other people's business. "But," said M. Clement, "what *will* you be, then?"—"On my word, nothing, nothing whatever (*Ma foi, rien, mais rien du tout*). I love study; I am very happy, very content, and want nothing else."

Here clearly is a youth of spirit, determined to take the world on the broadside, and eat thereof and be filled. His decided turn, like that of so many others, is for the trade of sovereign prince, in one shape or other; unhappily, however, the capital and outfit to set it up is wanting. Under which circumstances, nothing remains but to instruct M. Clement de Ris that no board-wages will henceforth be paid, and the young sovereign may, at his earliest convenience, be turned out of doors.

What Denis, perched aloft in his own hired attic, may have thought of it now, does not appear. The good old Father, in stopping his allowance, had reasonably enough insisted on one of two things: either that he should betake him to some intelligible method of existence, wherein all help should be furnished him; or else return home within the week. Neither of which could Denis think of doing. A similar demand continued to be reiterated for the next ten years, but always with the like non-effect. King Denis, in his furnished attic, with or without money to pay for it, was now living and reigning, like other kings, 'by the grace of God;' and could nowise resolve to abdicate. A sanguine-

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ous, vehement, volatile mortal; young, and in so wide an earth, it seemed to him next to impossible but he must find gold-mines there. He lived, while victual was to be got, taking no thought for the morrow. He had books, he had merry company, a whole piping and dancing Paris round him; he could teach Mathematics, he could turn himself so many ways; nay, might not he become a Mathematician one day; a glorified Savant, and strike the stars with his sublime head! Meanwhile he is like to be overtaken by one of the sharpest of human calamities, ‘cleanness of teeth.’

‘One Shrove Tuesday morning, he rises, gropes in his pocket; he has not wherewith to dine; will not trouble his friends who have not invited him. This day, which in childhood he had so often passed in the middle of relations who adored him, becomes sadder by remembrance: he cannot work; he hopes to dissipate his melancholy by a walk; goes to the Invalides, to the Courts, to the Bibliothèque du Roi, to the Jardin des Plantes. You may drive away tedium; but you cannot give hunger the slip. He returns to his quarters; on entering he feels unwell; the landlady gives him a little toast and wine; he goes to bed. “That day,” he has often said to me, “I swore that, if ever I came to have anything, I would never in my life refuse a poor man help, never condemn my fellow-creature to a day as painful.”’

That Diderot, during all this period, escaped starvation, is plain enough by the result: but how he specially accomplished that, and the other business of living, remains mostly left to conjecture. Mademoiselle, confined at any rate within narrow limits, continues as usual too intent on sparkling: is *brillante* and *pétillante*, rather than lucent and illuminating. How inferior, for *seeing* with, is your brightest train of fireworks to the humblest farthing candle! Who Diderot’s companions, friends, enemies, patrons were, what his way of life was, what the Paris he lived in and from his garret

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looked down on was, we learn only in hints, dislocated, enigmatic. It is in general to be impressed on us, that young Denis, as a sort of spiritual swashbuckler, who went about conquering Destiny, in light rapier-fence, by way of amusement; or at lowest, in reverses, gracefully insulting her with mock reverences,—lived and acted like no other man; all which being freely admitted, we ask, with small increase of knowledge, How did he act, then?

He gave lessons in Mathematics, we find; but with the princeliest indifference as to payment: ‘was his scholar ‘lively, and prompt of conception, he sat by him teaching ‘all day; did he chance on a blockhead, he returned not ‘back. They paid him in books, in movables, in linen, in ‘money, or not at all; it was quite the same.’ Farther, he made Sermons to order; as the Devil is said to quote Scripture: a Missionary bespoke half-a-dozen of him (of Denis, that is) for the Portuguese Colonies, and paid for them very handsomely at fifty crowns each. Once a family Tutorship came in his way, with tolerable appointments, but likewise with incessant duties: at the end of three months, he waits upon the house-father with this abrupt communication: “I am come, Monsieur, to request you to seek a new tutor; I cannot remain with you any longer.”—“But, Monsieur Diderot, what is your grievance? Have you too little salary? I will double it. Are you ill-lodged? Choose your apartment. Is your table ill-served? Order your own dinner. All will be cheap to parting with you.”—“Monsieur, look at me: a citron is not so yellow as my face. I am making men of your children; but every day I am becoming a child with them. I feel a hundred times too rich and too well off in your house; yet I must leave it: the object of my wishes is not to live better, but to keep from dying.”

Mademoiselle grants that, if sometimes ‘drunk with gaiety,’

he was often enough plunged in bitterness; but then a Newtonian problem, a fine thought, or any small godsend of that sort, would instantly cheer him again. The 'gold-mines' had not yet come to light. Meanwhile, between him and starvation we can still discern Langres covertly stretching out its hand. Of any Langres man, coming in his way, Denis frankly borrows; and the good old Father refuses not to pay. The Mother is still kinder, at least softer: she sends him direct help, as she can; not by the post, but by a serving-maid, who travelled these sixty leagues on foot; delivered him a small sum from his mother; and, without mentioning it, added all her own savings thereto. This Samaritan journey she performed three times. 'I saw her 'some years ago,' adds Mademoiselle; 'she spoke of my 'father with tears; her whole desire was to see him again: 'sixty years' service had impaired neither her sense nor her 'sensibility.'

It is granted also that his company was 'sometimes good, sometimes indifferent, not to say bad.' Indeed, putting all things together, we can easily fancy that the last sort was the preponderating. It seems probable that Denis, during these ten years of probation, walked chiefly in the subterranean shades of Rascaldom; now swilling from full Circe-goblets, now snuffing with haggard expectancy the hungry wind; always 'sorely flamed-on from the neighbouring hell.' In some of his fictitious writings, a most intimate acquaintance with the nether world of Polissons, Escrocs, Filles de Joie, Maroufles, Maquerelles, and their ways of doing, comes to light: among other things (as may be seen in *Jacques le Fataliste*, and elsewhere), a singular theoretic expertness in what is technically named 'raising the wind;' which miracle, indeed, Denis himself is expressly (in this *Mémoire*) found once performing, and in a style to

require legal cognisance, had not the worthy Father ‘sneered at the dupe, and paid.’ The dupe here was a proselytising Abbé, whom the dog glozed with professions of life-weariness and turning monk; which all evaporated, once the money was in his hands. On other occasions, it might turn out otherwise, and the gudgeon-fisher hook some shark of prey.

Literature, except in the way of Sermons for the Portuguese Colonies, or other the like small private dealings, had not yet opened her hospitable bosom to him. Epistles, precatory and amatory, for such as had more cash than grammar, he may have written; Catalogues also, Indexes, Advertisements, and, in these latter cases, even seen himself in print. But now he ventures forward, with bolder step, towards the interior mysteries, and begins producing Translations from the English. Literature, it is true, was then, as now, the universal free-hospital and Refuge for the Destitute, where all mortals, of what colour and kind soever, had liberty to live, or at least to die: nevertheless, for an enterprising man its resources at that time were comparatively limited. Newspapers were few; Reporting existed not, still less the inferior branches, with their fixed rate per line: Packwood and Warren, much more Panckouke and Colburn, as yet slumbered (the last century of their slumber) in the womb of Chaos; Fragmentary Panegyric-literature had not yet come into being, therefore could not be paid for. Talent wanted a free staple and workshop, where wages might be certain; and too often, like virtue, was praised and left starving. Lest the reader overrate the munificence of the literary cornucopia in France at this epoch, let us lead him into a small historical scene, that he may see with his own eyes. Diderot is the historian; the date too is many years later, when times, if anything, were mended:

‘I had given a poor devil a manuscript to copy. The time he had promised it at having expired, and my man not appearing, I grow uneasy; set off to hunt him out. I find him in a hole the size of my hand, almost without daylight, not the wretchedest tatter of serge to cover his walls; two straw-bottom chairs, a flock-bed, the coverlet chiselled with worms, without curtains; a trunk in a corner of the chimney, rags of all sorts hooked above it; a little white-iron lamp, with a bottle for pediment to it; on a deal shelf, a dozen of excellent books. I chatted with him three quarters of an hour. My gentleman was naked as a worm’ (*nu comme un ver*: it was August); ‘lean, dingy, dry, yet serene, complaining of nothing, eating his junk of bread with appetite, and from time to time caressing his beloved, who reclined on that miserable truckle, taking-up two-thirds of the room. If I had not known that happiness resides in the soul, my Epictetus of the Rue Hyacinthe might have taught it me.’

Notwithstanding all which, Denis, now in his twenty-ninth year, sees himself necessitated to fall desperately and over head and ears in love. It was a virtuous, pure attachment; his first of that sort, probably also his last. Readers who would see the business poetically delineated, and what talent Diderot had for such delineations, may read this scene in the once-noted Drama of the *Père de Famille*. It is known that he drew from the life; and with few embellishments, which too, except in the French Theatre, do not beautify.

‘ACT I. SCENE 7.

Saint-Albin. Father, you shall know all. Alas, how else can I move you?—The first time I ever saw her was at church. She was on her knees at the foot of the altar, beside an aged woman, whom I took for her mother. Ah, father! what modesty, what charms! . . . Her image followed me by day, haunted me by night, left me rest nowhere. I lost my cheerfulness, my health, my peace. I could not live without seeking to find her. . . . She has changed me; I am no longer what I was. From the first moment all shameful desires fade away from my soul; respect and admiration succeed them. With-

out rebuke or restraint on her part, perhaps before she had raised her eyes on me, I became timid; more so from day to day; and soon I felt as little free to attempt her virtue as her life.

The Father. And who are these women? How do they live?

Saint-Albin. Ah! if you knew it, unhappy as they are! Imagine that their toil begins before day, and often they have to continue it through the night. The mother spins on the wheel; hard coarse cloth is between the soft small fingers of Sophie, and wounds them.² Her eyes, the brightest eyes in this world, are worn at the light of a lamp. She lives in a garret, within four bare walls; a wooden table, a couple of chairs, a truckle-bed, that is their furniture. O Heavens, when ye fashioned such a creature, was this the lot ye destined her?

The Father. And how got you access? Speak me truth.

Saint-Albin. It is incredible what obstacles I had, what I surmounted. Though now lodged there, under the same roof, I at first did not seek to see them: if we met on the stairs, coming up, going down, I saluted them respectfully. At night, when I came home (for all day I was supposed to be at my work), I would go knock gently at their door; ask them for the little services usual among neighbours, —as water, fire, light. By degrees they grew accustomed to me; rather took to me. I offered to serve them in little things; for instance, they disliked going out at night; I fetched and carried for them.'

The real truth here is, "I ordered a set of shirts from them; said I was a Church-licentiate just bound for the Seminary of St. Nicholas,—and, above all, had the tongue of the old serpent." But to skip much, and finish:

'Yesterday I came as usual: Sophie was alone; she was sitting with her elbows on the table, her head leant on her hand; her work had fallen at her feet. I entered without her hearing me: she sighed. Tears escaped from between her fingers, and ran along her arms. For some time, of late, I had seen her sad. Why was she weeping? What was it that grieved her? Want it could no longer be; her labour and

² The real trade appears to have been a 'sempstress one in laces and linens:' the poverty is somewhat exaggerated; otherwise the shadow may be faithful enough.

my attentions provided against that. Threatened by the only misfortune terrible to me, I did not hesitate: I threw myself at her knees. What was her surprise! Sophie, said I, you weep; what ails you? Do not hide your trouble from me: speak to me; O, speak to me! She spoke not. Her tears continued flowing. Her eyes, where calmness no longer dwelt, but tears and anxiety, bent towards me, then turned away, then turned to me again. She said only, Poor Sergi! unhappy Sophie!—I had laid my face on her knees; I was wetting her apron with my tears.'

In a word, there is nothing for it but marriage. Old Diderot, joyous as he was to see his Son once more, started back in indignation and derision from such a proposal; and young Diderot had to return to Paris, and be forbid the beloved house, and fall sick, and come to the point of death, before the fair one's scruples could be subdued. However, she sent to get news of him; 'learnt that his room was a 'perfect dog-kennel, that he lay without nourishment, without attendance, wasted, sad: thereupon she took her resolution; mounted to him, promised to be his wife; and 'mother and daughter now became his nurses. So soon as 'he recovered, they went to Saint-Pierre, and were married 'at midnight (1744).' It only remains to add, that if the Sophie whom he had wedded fell much short of this Sophie whom he delineates, the fault was less in her qualities than in his own unstable fancy: as in youth she was 'tall, beautiful, pious and wise,' so through a long life she seems to have approved herself a woman of courage, discretion, faithful affection; far too good a wife for such a husband.

'My father was of too jealous a character to let my mother continue a traffic, which obliged her to receive strangers and treat with them: he begged her therefore to give-up that business; she was very loath to consent; poverty did not alarm her on her own account, but her mother was old, unlikely to remain with her long; and the fear

of not being able to provide for all her wants was afflicting: nevertheless, persuading herself that this sacrifice was for her husband's happiness, she made it. A char-woman looked-in daily, to sweep their little lodging, and fetch provisions for the day; my mother managed all the rest. Often when my father dined or supped out, she would dine or sup on bread; and took a great pleasure in the thought that, next day, she could double her little ordinary for him. Coffee was too considerable a luxury for a household of this sort: but she could not think of his wanting it, and every day gave him six sous to go and have his cup, at the Café de la Régence, and see the chess-playing there.

'It was now that he translated the *History of Greece* in three volumes' (by the English Stanyan); 'he sold it for a hundred crowns. This sum brought a sort of supply into the house. * * *

'My mother had been brought to bed of a daughter: she was now big a second time. In spite of her precautions, solitary life, and the pains she had taken to pass-off her husband as her brother, his family, in the seclusion of their province, learnt that he was living with two women. Directly, the birth, the morals, the character of my mother became objects of the blackest calumny. He foresaw that discussions by letter would be endless; he found it simpler to put his wife into the stage-coach, and send her to his parents. She had just been delivered of a son; he announced this event to his father, and the departure of my mother. "She set out yesterday," said he; "she will be with you in three days. You will say to her what shall please you, and send her back when you are tired of her." Singular as this sort of explanation was, they determined, in any case, on sending my father's sister to receive her. Their first welcome was more than cold: the evening grew less painful to her; but next morning betimes she went in to her father-in-law; treated him as if he had been her own father; her respect and her caresses charmed the good, sensible old man. Coming down stairs, she began working: refused nothing that could please a family whom she was not afraid of, and wished to be loved by. Her conduct was the only excuse she gave for her husband's choice: her appearance had prepossessed them in her favour; her simplicity, her piety, her talents for household economy secured her their tenderness; they promised her that my father's disinheriement should be revoked. They kept her three months; and sent her

back loaded with whatever they could think would be useful or agreeable to her.'

All this is beautiful, told with a graceful simplicity; the beautiful, real-ideal prose-idyl of a Literary Life: but, alas, in the music of your prose-idyl there lurks ever an accursed dissonance (or the players make one); where men are, there will be mischief. 'This journey,' writes Mademoiselle, 'cost my mother many tears.' What will the reader say when he finds that Monsieur Diderot has, in the interim, taken up with a certain Madame de Puisieux; and welcomes his brave Wife (worthy to have been a true man's) with a heart and bosom henceforth estranged from her! Madame Diderot 'made two journeys to Langres, and both were fatal to her 'peace.' This affair of the Puisieux, for whom he despicably enough not only burned, but toiled and made money, kept him busy for some ten years; till at length, finding that she played false, he gave her up; and minor miscellaneous flirtations seem to have succeeded. But, returning from her *second* journey, the much-enduring Housemother finds him in meridian glory with one Voland, the *un*-maiden Daughter of a 'Financier's Widow;' to whom we owe this present preternuptial *Correspondance*; to whom indeed he mainly devoted himself for the rest of his life,—'parting his time between his study and her;' to his own wife and household giving little save the trouble of cooking for him, and of painfully, with repressed or irrepressible discontent, keeping up some appearance of terms with him. Alas! alas! and his Puisieux seems to have been a hollow mercenary (to whose scandalous soul he reckons obscenest of Books fit nutriment); and the Voland an elderly spinster, with *cœur sensible, cœur honnête, âme tendre et bonne!* And then those old dinings on bread; the six sous spared for his cup of coffee! Foolish Diderot, scarcely pardonable Diderot! A

hard saying is this, yet a true one: Scoundrelism signifies injustice, and should be left to scoundrels alone. For thy wronged wife, whom thou hadst sworn far other things to, ever in her afflictions (here so hostilely scanned and written of) a true sympathy will awaken; and sorrow that the patient, or even impatient, endurances of such a woman should be matter of speculation and self-gratulation to such another.

But looking out of doors now, from an indifferently-guided Household, which must have fallen shamefully in pieces, had not a wife been wiser and stronger than her husband,—we find the *Philosophe* making distinct way with the Bibliopolic world; and likely, in the end, to pick up a kind of living there. The Stanyan's *History of Greece*; the other English-translated, nameless *Medical Dictionary*, are dropped by all editors as worthless: a like fate might, with little damage, have overtaken the *Essai sur le Mérite et la Vertu*, rendered or redacted out of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*. In which redaction, with its Notes, of anxious Orthodoxy, and bottomless Falsehood looking through it, we individually have found nothing, save a confirmation of the old twice-repeated experience, That in Shaftesbury's famed Book there lay, if any meaning, a meaning of such long-windedness, circumvolution and lubricity, that, like an eel, it must forever slip through our fingers, and leave us alone among the gravel. One reason may partly be, that Shaftesbury was not only a Sceptic but an Amateur Sceptic; which sort a darker, more earnest, have long since swallowed and abolished. The meaning of a delicate, perfumed, gentlemanly individual standing there, in that war of Titans (hill meeting hill with all its woods), and putting out hand to it—with a pair of tweezers?

However, our Denis has now emerged from the inter-

mediate Hades of Translatorship into the Heaven of perfected Authorship: empties his commonplace book of *Pensées Philosophiques* (it is said in the space of four days); writes his Metaphysico-Baconian phantasmagories on the *Interprétation de la Nature* (an endless business to 'interpret'); and casts the money-produce of both into the lap of his Scarlet-woman Puisieux. Then forthwith, for the same object, in a shameful fortnight, puts together the beastliest of all past, present or future dull Novels; a difficult feat, unhappily not an impossible one. If any mortal creature, even a Reviewer, be again compelled to glance into that Book, let him bathe himself in running water, put on change of raiment, and be unclean until the even. As yet the Metaphysico-Atheistic *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets* and *Lettre sur les Aveugles*, which brings glory and a three-months lodging in the Castle of Vincennes, are at years' distance in the background. But already by his gilded tongue, growing repute and sanguine projecting temper, he has persuaded Booksellers to pay-off the Abbé Gua, with his lean Version of *Chambers's Dictionary of Arts*, and convert it into an *Encyclopédie*, with himself and D'Alembert for Editors: and is henceforth (from the year of grace 1751) a duly dis-indentured *Man of Letters*, an indisputable and more and more conspicuous member of that surprising guild.

Literature, ever since its appearance in our European world, especially since it emerged out of Cloisters into the open Market-place, and endeavoured to make itself room, and gain a subsistence there, has offered the strangest phases, and consciously or unconsciously done the strangest work. Wonderful Ark of the Deluge, where so much that is precious, nay priceless to mankind, floats carelessly onwards through the Chaos of distracted Times,—if so be it may one day find an Ararat to rest on, and see the waters abate!

The History of Literature, especially for the last two centuries, is our proper Church History; the other Church, during that time, having more and more decayed from its old functions and influence, and ceased to have a history. And now, to look only at the outside of the matter, think of the Tassos and older or later Racines, struggling to raise their office from its pristine abasement of court-jester; and teach and elevate the World, in conjunction with that other quite heteroclite task of solacing and glorifying some *Pullus Jovis*, in plush cloak and other gilt or golden king-tackle, that they in the interim might live thereby! Consider the Shakspeares and Molières, plying a like trade, but on a double material; glad of any royal or noble patronage, but eliciting, as their surer stay, some fractional contribution from the thick-skinned, many-pocketed million. Saumaises, now bully-fighting 'for a hundred gold Jacobuses,' now closeted with Queen Christinas, who blow the fire with their own queenly mouth, to make a pedant's breakfast; anon cast forth (being scouted and confuted), and dying of heartbreak, coupled with henpeck. Then the Laws of Copyright, the Quarrels of Authors, the Calamities of Authors; the Heynes dining on boiled peascods, the Jean Pauls on water; the Johnsons bedded and boarded on fourpence-halfpenny a-day. Lastly, the unutterable confusion worse confounded of our present Periodical existence; when, among other phenomena, a young Fourth Estate (whom all the three elder may try if they can hold) is seen sprawling and staggering tumultuously through the world; as yet but a huge, raw-boned, lean *calf*; fast growing, however, to be a Pharaoh's lean cow,—of whom let the fat kine beware!

All this, of the mere exterior, or dwelling-place of Literature, not yet glancing at the internal, at the Doctrines emitted or striven after, will the future Eusebius and Mosheim have

to record; and (in some small degree) explain to us what it means. Unfathomable is its meaning: Life, mankind's Life, ever from its unfathomable fountains, rolls wondrous on, another though the same; in Literature too, the seeing eye will distinguish Apostles of the Gentiles, Proto- and Deuteromartyrs; still less will the Simon Magus, or Apollonius with the golden thigh, be wanting. But all now is on an infinitely *wider scale*; the elements of it all swim far-scattered, and still only striving towards union;—whereby, indeed, it happens that to the most, under this new figure, they are unrecognisable.

French Literature, in Diderot's time, presents itself in a certain state of culmination, where causes long prepared are rapidly becoming effects; and was doubtless in one of its more notable epochs. Under the Economic aspect, in France, as in England, this was the Age of Booksellers; when, as a Dodsley and Miller could risk capital in an *English Dictionary*, a Lebreton and Briasson could become purveyors and commissariat-officers for a French *Encyclopédie*. The world forever loves Knowledge, and would part with its last sixpence in payment thereof: this your Dodsleys and Lebretons well saw; moreover they could act on it, for as yet PUFFERY was not. Alas, offences must come; Puffery from the first was inevitable: woe to them, nevertheless, by whom it did come! Meanwhile, as we said, it slept in Chaos; the Word of man and tradesman was still partially credible to man. Booksellers were therefore a possible, were even a necessary class of mortals, though a strangely anomalous one; had they kept from lying, or lied with any sort of moderation, the anomaly might have lasted still longer. For the present, they managed in Paris as elsewhere: the Timber-headed could perceive that for Thought

the world would give money; farther, by mere shopkeeper cunning, that true Thought, as in the end sure to be recognised, and by nature infinitely more durable, was better to deal in than false; farther, by credible tradition of public consent, that such and such had the talent of furnishing true Thought (say rather *truer*, as the more correct word): on this hint the Timber-headed spake and bargained. Nay, let us say he bargained, and worked, for most part with industrious assiduity, with patience, suitable prudence; nay sometimes with touches of generosity and magnanimity, beautifully irradiating the circumambient mass of greed and dulness. For the rest, the two high contracting parties roughed it out as they could; so that if Booksellers, in their back-parlour Valhalla, drank wine out of the skulls of Authors (as they were fabled to do), Authors, in the front-apartments, from time to time, gave them a Roland for their Oliver: a Johnson can knock his Osborne on the head, like any other Bull of Bashan; a Diderot commands his corpulent Panckouke to "Leave the room, and go to the devil; *Allez au diable, sortez de chez moi!*"

Under the internal or Doctrinal aspect, again, French Literature, we can see, knew far better what it was about than English. That fable, indeed, first set afloat by some Trevoux Journalist of the period, and which has floated foolishly enough into every European ear since then, of there being an Association specially organised for the destruction of government, religion, society, civility (not to speak of tithes, rents, life and property), all over the world; which hell-serving Association met at the Baron d'Holbach's, there had its blue-light sederunts, and published Transactions legible to all,—was and remains nothing but a fable. Minute-books, president's hammer, ballot-box, punch-bowl of such Pandemonium have not been produced to the world.

The sect of Philosophes existed at Paris, but as other sects do; held together by loosest, informal, unrecognised ties; within which every one, no doubt, followed his own natural objects, of proselytism, of glory, of getting a livelihood. Meanwhile, whether in constituted association or not, French Philosophy resided in the persons of the French Philosophes; and, as a mighty deep-struggling Force, was at work there. Deep-struggling, irrepressible; the subterranean fire, which long heaved unquietly, and shook all things with an ominous motion, was here, we can say, forming itself a decided spiracle;—which, by and by, as French Revolution, became that volcano-crater, world-famous, world-appalling, world-maddening, as yet very far from closed! Fontenelle said, he wished he could live sixty years longer, and see what that universal infidelity, depravity and dissolution of all ties would turn to. In threescore years Fontenelle might have seen strange things; but not the end of the phenomenon perhaps in three hundred.

Why France became such a volcano-crater, what specialties there were in the French national character, and political, moral, intellectual condition, by virtue whereof French Philosophy there and not elsewhere, then and not sooner or later, evolved itself,—is an inquiry that has been often put, and cheerfully answered; the true answer of which might lead us far. Still deeper than this *Whence* were the question of *Whither*;—with which, also, we intermeddle not here. Enough for us to understand that there verily a Scene of Universal History is being enacted, a little living TIME-picture in the bosom of ETERNITY;—and, with the feeling due in that case, to ask not so much *Why* it is, as *What* it is. Leaving priorities and posteriorities aside, and cause-and-effect to adjust itself elsewhere, conceive so many vivid spirits thrown together into the Europe, into the Paris of

that day, and see how they demean themselves, what they work-out and attain there.

As the *mystical* enjoyment of an object goes infinitely farther than the *intellectual*, and we can *look* at a picture with delight and profit, after all that we can be *taught* about it is grown poor and wearisome; so here, and by far stronger reason, these light Letters of Diderot to the Voland, again unveiling and *showing* Parisian Life, are worth more to us than many a heavy tome laboriously struggling to explain it. True, we have seen the picture, that same Parisian life-picture, ten times already; but we can look at it an eleventh time: nay this, as we said, is not a canvas-picture, but a life-picture, of whose significance there is no end for us. Grudge not the elderly Spinster her existence, then; say not she has lived in vain. For what of History there is in this Preternuptial Correspondence should we not endeavour to forgive and forget all else, the *sensibilité* itself? The curtain which had fallen for almost a century is again drawn up; the scene is alive and busy. Figures grown historical are here seen face to face, and live before us.

A strange theatre that of French Philosophism; a strange dramatic corps! Such another corps for brilliancy and levity, for gifts and vices, and all manner of sparkling inconsistencies, the world is not like to see again. There is Patriarch Voltaire, of all Frenchmen the most French; he whom the French had, as it were, long waited for, 'to produce at once, 'in a single life, all that French genius most prized and most 'excelled in;' of him and his wondrous ways, as of one known, we need say little. Instant enough to 'crush the Abomination, *écraser l'Infâme*,' he has prosecuted his Jesuit-hunt over many lands and many centuries, in many ways, with an alacrity that has made him dangerous, and endangered him: he now sits at Ferney, withdrawn from the active toils of

the chase; cheers-on his hunting-dogs mostly from afar: Diderot, a beagle of the first vehemence, he has rather to restrain. That all extant and possible Theology be abolished, will not content the fell Denis, as surely it might have done; the Patriarch has to address him a friendly admonition on his Atheism, and make him eat it again.

D'Alembert, too, we may consider as one known; of all the Philosophe fraternity, him who in speech and conduct agrees best with our English notions: an independent, patient, prudent man; of great faculty, especially of great clearness and method; famous in Mathematics; no less so, to the wonder of some, in the intellectual provinces of Literature. A foolish wonder; as if the Thinker could think only on one thing, and not on *any* thing he had a call towards. D'Alembert's *Mélanges*, as the impress of a genuine spirit, in peculiar position and probation, have still instruction for us, both of head and heart. The man lives retired here, in questionable seclusion with his Espinasse; incurs the suspicion of apostasy, because in the *Encyclopédie* he saw no Evangel and celestial Revelation, but only a huge Folio Dictionary; and would not venture life and limb on it without a 'consideration.' Sad was it to Diderot to see his fellow-voyager make for port, and disregard signals, when the sea-krakens rose round him! They did not quarrel; were always friendly when they met, but latterly met only at the rate of 'once in the two years.' D'Alembert died when Diderot was on his deathbed: "My friend," said the latter to the news-bringer, "a great light is gone out."

Hovering in the distance, with wostruck, minatory air, stern-beckoning, comes Rousseau. Poor Jean Jacques! Alternately deified, and cast to the dogs; a deep-minded, high-minded, even noble, yet wofully misarranged mortal, with all misformations of Nature intensated to the verge of mad-

ness by unfavourable Fortune. A lonely man; his life a long soliloquy! The wandering Tiresias of the time;—in whom, however, did lie prophetic meaning, such as none of the others offer. Whereby indeed it might partly be that the world went to such extremes about him; that, long after his departure, we have seen one whole nation worship him, and a Burke, in the name of another, class him with the off-scourings of the earth. His true character, with its lofty aspirings and poor performings; and how the spirit of the man worked so wildly, like celestial fire in a thick dark element of chaos, and shot-forth ethereal radiance, all-piercing lightning, yet could not illuminate, was quenched and did not conquer: this, with what lies in it, may now be pretty accurately appreciated. Let his history teach all whom it concerns, to ‘*harden* themselves against the ills which Mother Nature will try them with;’ to seek within their own soul what the world must forever deny them; and say composedly to the Prince of the Power of this lower Earth and Air: Go thou thy way; I go mine!

Rousseau and Diderot were early friends: who has forgotten how Jean Jacques walked to the Castle of Vincennes, where Denis (for heretical Metaphysics, and irreverence to the Strumpetocracy) languishes in durance; and devised his first Literary Paradox on the road thither? Their Quarrel, which, as a fashionable hero of the time complains, occupied all Paris, is likewise famous enough. The reader recollects that heroical epistle of Diderot to Grimm on that occasion, and the sentence: ‘O, my friend, let us continue virtuous; for the state of those who have ceased to be so makes me shudder.’ But is the reader aware what the fault of him ‘who has ceased to be so’ was? A series of ravelments and squabbling grudges, ‘which,’ says Mademoiselle with much simplicity, ‘the Devil himself could not understand.’

Alas, the Devil well understood it, and Tyrant Grimm too did, who had the ear of Diderot, and poured into it his own unjust, almost abominable spleen. Clean paper need not be soiled with a foul story, where the main actor is only 'Tyran le Blanc;' enough to know that the continually virtuous Tyrant found Diderot 'extremely impressionable;' so poor Jean Jacques must go his ways (with both the scath and the scorn), and among his many woes bear this also. Diderot is not blamable; pitiable rather; for who would be a pipe, which not Fortune only, but any Sycophant may play tunes on?

Of this same Tyrant Grimm, desiring to speak peaceably, we shall say little. The man himself is less remarkable than his fortune. Changed times indeed, since the threadbare German Bursch quitted Ratisbon, with the sound of catcalls in his ears, the condemned 'Tragedy, *Banise*,' in his pocket; and fled southward, on a thin travelling-tutorship;—since Rousseau met you, Herr Grimm, 'a young man 'described as seeking a situation, and whose appearance indicated the pressing necessity he was in of soon finding 'one!' Of a truth, you have flourished since then, Herr Grimm: his introductions of you to Diderot, to Holbach, to the black-locked D'Epinay, where not only you are wormed-in, but he is wormed-out, have turned to somewhat; the Threadbare has become well-napped, and got ruffles and jewel-rings, and walks abroad in sword and bagwig, and lacquers his brass countenance with rouge, and so (as *Tyran le Blanc*) recommends himself to the fair; and writes Parisian Philosophe-gossip to the Hyperborean Kings, and his 'Grimm's Leaves,' copied 'to the number of twenty,' are bread of life to many; and cringes here, and domineers there; and lives at his ease in the Creation, in an effective *tendresse* with the D'Epinay, husband or custom of the coun-

try not objecting!—Poor Börne, the new German Flying-Sansculotte, feels his mouth water, at Paris, over these flesh-pots of Grimm: reflecting with what heart he too could write ‘Leaves,’ and be fed thereby. Börne, my friend, those days are done! While Northern Courts were a ‘Lunar Versailles,’ it was well to have an Uriel stationed in their Sun there; but of all spots in this Universe (hardly excepting Tophet) Paris now is the one we at court could best *dispense* with news from; never more, in these centuries, will a Grimm be missioned thither; never a ‘Leaf of Börne’ be blown court-wards by any wind. As for the Grimm, we can see that he was a man made to rise in the world: a fair, even handsome outfit of talent, wholly marketable; skill in music, and the like, encyclopedical readiness in all ephemera; saloon-wit, a trenchant, unhesitating head; above all, a heart ever in the right place,—in the market-place, namely, and marked ‘for sale to the highest bidder.’ Really a methodical, adroit, managing man. By ‘hero-worship,’ and the cunning appliance of alternate sweet and sullen, he has brought Diderot to be his patient milk-cow, whom he can milk an Essay from, a Volume from, when he lists. Victorious Grimm! He even escaped those same ‘horrors of the French Revolution’ (with loss of his ruffles); and was seen at the Court of Gotha, sleek and well to live, within the memory of man.

The world has heard of M. le Chevalier de Saint-Lambert; considerable in Literature, in Love and War. He is here again, singing the frostiest Pastorals; happily, however, only in the distance, and the jingle of his wires soon dies away. Of another Chevalier, worthy Jaucourt, be the name mentioned, and little more: he digs unweariedly, molewise, in the Encyclopedic field, catching what he can, and shuns the light. Then there is Helvetius, the well-fed

Farmer-general, enlivening his sybaritic life with metaphysic paradoxes. His revelations *De l'Homme* and *De l'Esprit* breathe the freest Philosophe-spirit, with Philanthropy and Sensibility enough: the greater is our astonishment to find him here so ardent a Preserver of the Game:

‘This Madame de Nocé,’ writes Diderot, treating of the Bourbonne Hot-springs, ‘is a neighbour of Helvetius. She told us, the Philosopher was the unhappiest man in the world on his estates. He is surrounded there by neighbours and peasants who detest him. They break the windows of his mansion, plunder his grounds by night, cut his trees, throw down his walls, tear-up his spiked paling. He dare not go to shoot a hare, without a train of people to guard him. You will ask me, How it has come to pass? By a boundless zeal for his game. M. Fagon, his predecessor, used to guard the grounds with two keepers and two guns. Helvetius has twenty-four, and cannot do it. These men have a small premium for every poacher they can catch; and there is no sort of mischief they will not cause to get more and more of these. Besides, they are themselves so many hired poachers. Again, the border of his woods was inhabited by a set of poor people, who had got huts there; he has caused all the huts to be swept away. It is these, and such acts of repeated tyranny, that have raised him enemies of all kinds; and the more insolent, says Madame de Nocé, as they have discovered that the worthy Philosopher is a coward. I would not have his fine estate of Voré as a present, had I to live there in these perpetual alarms. What profits he draws from that mode of management I know not: but he is alone there; he is hated, he is in fear. Ah! how much wiser was our lady Geofrin; when speaking of a lawsuit that tormented her, she said to me, “Get done with my lawsuit; they want money? I have it. Give them money. What better use can I make of my money than to buy peace with it?” In Helvetius’s place, I would have said, “They kill me a few hares and rabbits; let them be doing. These poor creatures have no shelter but my forest; let them stay there.” I should have reasoned like M. Fagon, and been adored like him.’

Alas! are not Helvetius’s preserves, at this hour, all broken up, and lying desecrated? Neither can the others,

in what latitude and longitude soever, remain eternally impregnable. But if a Rome was once saved by geese, need we wonder that an England is lost by partridges? We are sons of Eve, who bartered Paradise for an apple.

But to return to Paris and its Philosophe Church-militant. Here is a Marmontel, an active subaltern thereof, who fights in a small way, through the *Mercur*; and, in rose-pink romance-pictures, strives to celebrate the ‘moral sublime.’ An Abbé Morellet, busy with the Corn-Laws, walks in at intervals, stooping, shrunk together, ‘as if to get nearer himself, *pour être plus près de lui-même.*’ The rogue Galiani alternates between Naples and Paris; Galiani, by good luck, has ‘forever settled the question of the Corn-Laws:’ an idle fellow otherwise; a spiritual Lazzarone; full of frolics, wanton quips, anti-jesuit *gesta*, and wild Italian humour; the sight of his swart, sharp face is the signal for Laughter,—in which, indeed, the Man himself has unhappily evaporated, leaving no result behind him.

Of the Baron d’Holbach thus much may be said, that both at Paris and at Grandval he gives good dinners. His two or three score volumes of Atheistic Philosophism, which he published (at his own expense), may now be forgotten and even forgiven. A purse open and deep, a heart kindly-disposed, quiet, sociable, or even friendly; these, with excellent wines, gain him a literary elevation, which no thinking faculty he had could have pretended to. An easy, laconic gentleman; of grave politeness; apt to lose temper at play; yet, on the whole, good-humoured, eupeptic and eupractic: there may he live, and let live.

Nor is heaven’s last gift to man wanting here; the natural sovereignty of women. Your Châtelets, Epinays, Esplanasses, Geoffrins, Deffands, will play their part too: there shall, in all senses, be not only Philosophers, but Philoso-

phesses. Strange enough is the figure these women make: good souls, it was a strange world for them. What with metaphysics and flirtation, system of nature, fashion of dress-caps, vanity, curiosity, jealousy, atheism, rheumatism, *traités*, *bouts-rimés*, noble-sentiments, and rouge-pots,—the vehement female intellect sees itself sailing on a chaos, where a wiser might have wavered, if not foundered. For the rest (as an accurate observer has remarked), they become a sort of Lady-Presidents in that society; attain great influence; and, imparting as well as receiving, communicate to all that is done or said somewhat of their own peculiar tone.

In a world so wide and multifarious, this little band of Philosophes, acting and speaking as they did, had a most various reception to expect; votes divided to the uttermost. The mass of mankind, busy enough with their own work, of course heeded them only when forced to do it; these, meanwhile, form the great neutral element, in which the battle has to fight itself; the two hosts, according to their several success, to recruit themselves. Of the Higher Classes, it appears, the small proportion not wholly occupied in eating and dressing, and therefore open to such a question, are in their favour,—strange as to us it may seem; the spectacle of a Church pulled down is, in stagnant times, amusing; nor do the generality, on either side, yet see whither ulteriorly it is tending. The Reading World, which was then more than now the intelligent, inquiring world, reads eagerly (as it will ever do) whatsoever skilful, sprightly, reasonable-looking word is written for it; enjoying, appropriating the same; perhaps without fixed judgment, or deep care of any kind. Careful enough, fixed enough, on the other hand, is the Jesuit Brotherhood; in these days sick unto death; but only the bitterer and angrier for that.

Dangerous are the death-convulsions of an expiring Sorbonne, ever and anon filling Paris with agitation: it behoves your Philosophe to walk warily, and in many a critical circumstance, to weep with the one cheek, and smile with the other.

Nor is Literature itself wholly Philosophe: apart from the Jesuit regulars, in their Trevoux Journals, Sermons, Episcopal Charges, and other camps or casemates, a considerable Guerrilla or Reviewer force (consisting, as usual, of smugglers, unemployed destitute persons, deserters who have been refused promotion, and other the like broken characters) has organised itself, and maintains a harassing bush-warfare: of these the chieftain is Fréron, once in tolerable repute with the world, had he not, carrying too high a head, struck his foot on stones, and stumbled. By the continual depreciating of talent grown at length undeniable, he has sunk low enough: Voltaire, in the *Ecossaise*, can bring him on the stage, and have him killed by laughter, under the name, sufficiently recognisable, of *Wasp* (in French, *Frelon*). Another Empecedor, still more hateful, is Palissot, who has written and got acted a Comedy of *Les Philosophes*, at which the Parisians, spite of its dulness, have also laughed. To laugh at *us*, the so meritorious *us*! Heard mankind ever the like? For poor Palissot, had he fallen into Philosophe hands, serious bodily tar-and-feathering might have been apprehended: as it was, they do what the pen, with its gall and copperas, can; invoke Heaven and Earth to witness the treatment of Divine Philosophy;—with which view, in particular, friend Diderot seems to have composed his *Rameau's Nephew*, wherein Palissot and others of his kidney are (figuratively speaking) mauled and mangled, and left not in dog's likeness. So divided was the world, Literary, Courtly, Miscellaneous, on this matter: it was a confused anomalous time.

Among its more notable anomalies may be reckoned the relations of French Philosophism to Foreign Crowned Heads. In Prussia there is a *Philosophe King*; in Russia a *Philosophe Empress*: the whole North swarms with kinglets and queenlets of the like temper. Nay, as we have seen, they entertain their special ambassador in *Philosophedom*, their lion's-provider to furnish spiritual *Philosophe-provender*; and pay him well. The great Frederic, the great Catherine are as nursing-father and nursing-mother to this new Church of Antichrist; in all straits, ready with money, honourable royal asylum, help of every sort,—which, however, except in the money-shape, the wiser of our Philosophes are shy of receiving, Voltaire had tried it in the asylum-shape, and found it unsuitable; D'Alembert and Diderot decline repeating the experiment. What miracles are wrought by the arch-magician Time! Could these Frederics, Catherines, Josephs, have looked forward some threescore years; and beheld the Holy Alliance in conference at Laybach! But so goes the world: kings are not seraphic doctors, with gift of prescience, but only men, with common eyesight, participating in the influences of their generation: kings too, like all mortals, have a certain love of knowledge; still more infallibly, a certain desire of applause; a certain delight in mortifying one another. Thus what is persecuted here finds refuge there; and ever, one way or other, the New works itself out full-formed from under the Old; nay the Old, as in this instance, sits sedulously hatching a cockatrice that will one day devour it.

No less anomalous, confused and contradictory is the relation of the Philosophes to their own Government. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, their relation to Society being still so undecided; and the Government, which might have endeavoured to adjust and preside over this, being itself in

a state of anomaly, death-lethargy, and doting decrepitude? The true conduct and position for a French Sovereign towards French Literature, in that country might have been, though perhaps of all things the most important, one of the most difficult to discover and accomplish. What chance was there that a thick-blooded Louis Quinze, from his *Parc aux Cerfs*, should discover it, should have the faintest inkling of it? His 'peaceable soul' was quite otherwise employed: Minister after Minister must consult his own several insight, his own whim, above all his own ease: and so the whole business, now when we look on it, comes out one of the most botched, piebald, inconsistent, lamentable and even ludicrous objects in the history of State-craft. Alas, necessity has no *law*: the statesman, without light, perhaps even without eyes, whom Destiny nevertheless constrains to 'govern' his nation in a time of World-Downfall, what shall he do, but if so may be, collect the taxes; prevent in some degree murder and arson; and for the rest, wriggle hither and thither, return upon his steps, clout-up old rents and open new,—and, on the whole, eat his victuals, and let the Devil govern it? Of the pass to which Statesmanship had come in respect of Philosophism, let this one fact be evidence instead of a thousand. M. de Malesherbes writes to warn Diderot that, next day, he will give orders to have all his papers seized.—Impossible! answers Diderot: *juste ciel!* how shall I sort them, where shall I hide them, within four-and-twenty hours? *Send them to me*, answers M. de Malesherbes! Thither accordingly they go, under lock and seal; and the hungry catchpoles find nothing but empty drawers.

The *Encyclopédie* was set forth first 'with approbation and *Privilège du Roi*;' next, it was stopped by Authority: next, the public murmuring, suffered to proceed; then again, positively for the last time, stopped,—and, no whit the less,

printed, and written, and circulated, under thin disguises, some hundred and fifty printers working at it with open doors, all Paris knowing of it, only Authority winking hard. Choiseul, in his resolute way, had now shut the eyes of Authority, and kept them shut. Finally, to crown the whole matter, a copy of the prohibited Book lies in the King's private library: and owes favour, and a withdrawal of the prohibition, to the foolishlest accident:

'One of Louis Fifteenth's domestics told me,' says Voltaire, 'that once, the King his master supping, in private circle (*en petite compagnie*), at Trianon, the conversation turned first on the chase, and from this on gunpowder. Some one said that the best powder was made of sulphur, saltpetre, and charcoal, in equal parts. The Duc de la Vallière, with better knowledge, maintained that for good powder there must be one part of sulphur, one of charcoal, with five of saltpetre, well filtered, well evaporated, well crystallised.

"It is pleasant," said the Duc de Nivernois, "that we who daily amuse ourselves with killing partridges in the Park of Versailles, and sometimes with killing men, or getting ourselves killed, on the frontiers, should not know what that same work of killing is done with."

"Alas! we are in the like case with all things in this world," answered Madame de Pompadour: "I know not what the rouge I put upon my cheeks is made of; you would bring me to a nonplus, if you asked how the silk hose I wear are manufactured." "'Tis a pity," said the Duc de la Vallière, "that his Majesty confiscated our *Dictionnaires Encyclopédiques*, which cost us our hundred pistoles; we should soon find the decision of all our questions there." The King justified the act of confiscation; he had been informed that these twenty-one folio volumes, to be found lying on all ladies' toilettes, were the most pernicious things in the world for the kingdom of France; he had resolved to look for himself if this were true, before suffering the book to circulate. Towards the end of the repast, he sends three of his valets to bring him a copy; they enter, struggling under seven volumes each. The article *powder* is turned up; the Duc de la Vallière is found to be right: and soon Madame de Pompadour learns the difference between the old *rouge d'Espagne* with which the

ladies of Madrid coloured their cheeks, and the *rouge des dames* of Paris. She finds that the Greek and Roman ladies painted with a purple extracted from the *murex*, and that consequently our scarlet is the purple of the ancients; and that there is more purple in the *rouge d'Espagne*, and more cochineal in that of France. She learns how stockings are woven; the stocking-frame described there fills her with amazement. "Ah, what a glorious book!" cried she. "Sire, did you confiscate this magazine of all useful things, that you might have it wholly to yourself, then, and be the one learned man in your kingdom?" Each threw himself on the volumes, like the daughters of Lycomedes on the jewels of Ulysses; each found forthwith whatever he was seeking. Some who had lawsuits were surprised to see the decision of them there. The King reads there all the rights of his crown. "Well, in truth (*mais vraiment*)," said he, "I know not why they said so much ill of the book." "Ah, sire," said the Duc de Nivernois, "does not your Majesty see," &c. &c.'

In such a confused world, under such unheard-of circumstances, must friend Diderot ply his editorial labours. No sinecure is it! Penetrating into all subjects and sciences; waiting and rummaging in all libraries, laboratories; nay, for many years, fearlessly diving into all manner of workshops, unscrewing stocking-looms, and even working thereon (that the department of *Arts and Trades* might be perfect); then seeking out contributors, and flattering them, quickening their laziness, getting payment for them; quarrelling with Bookseller and Printer: bearing all miscalculations, misfortunes, misdoings of so many fallible men (for there all at last lands) on his single back: surely this was enough, without having farther to do battle with the beagles of Office, perilously withstand them, expensively sop them, toilsomely elude them! Nevertheless, he perseveres, and will not but persevere;—less, perhaps, with the deliberate courage of a Man, who has compared result and outlay, than with the passionate obstinacy of a Woman, who, having

made-up her mind, will shrink at no ladder of ropes, but ride with her lover, though all the four Elements gainsay it. At every new concussion from the Powers, he roars; say rather, shrieks, for there is a female shrillness in it; proclaiming, Murder! Robbery! Rape! invoking men and angels; meanwhile proceeds unweariedly with the printing. It is a hostile building-up, not of the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, but of the Unholy one at Paris: thus must Diderot, like Ezra, come to strange extremities; and every workman works with his trowel in one hand, in the other his weapon of war; that so, in spite of all Tiglaths, the work go on, and the topstone of it be brought out with shouting.

Shouting! Ah, what faint broken quaver is that in the shout; as of a man that shouted with the throat only, and inwardly was bowed down with dispiritment? It is Diderot's faint broken quaver; he is sick and heavy of soul. Scandalous enough: the Goth Lebreton, loving, as he says, his head better even than his profit, has for years gone privily at dead of night to the finished Encyclopedic proof-sheets, and there with nefarious pen scratched out whatever to *him* seemed dangerous; filling-up the gap as *he* could, or merely letting it fill itself up. Heaven and Earth! Not only are the finer Philosophe sallies mostly cut out,—but hereby has the work become a sunken, hitching, ungainly mass, little better than a monstrosity. Goth! Hun! sacrilegious Attila of the book-trade! O, surely for this treason the hottest of Dante's Purgatory were too temperate. Infamous art thou, Lebreton, to all ages—that read the *Encyclopédie*; and Philosophes not yet in swaddling-clothes shall gnash their teeth over thee, and spit upon thy memory.—Lebreton pockets both the abuse and the cash, and sleeps sound in a whole skin. The able Editor could never be said to get entirely the better of it while he lived.

Now, however, it is time that, quitting generalities, we go, in this fine autumn weather, to Holbach's at Grandval, where the hardworked but unwearied Encyclopedist, with plenty of ink and writing-paper, is sure to be. Ever in the Holbach household his arrival is a holyday; if a quarrel spring up, it is only because he will not come, or too soon goes away. A man of social talent, with such a tongue as Diderot's, in a mansion where the only want to be guarded against was that of wit, could not be other than welcome. He composes Articles there, and walks, and dines, and plays cards, and talks; languishingly waits letters from his Voland, copiously writes to her. It is in these copious love-despatches that the whole matter is so graphically painted: we have an Asmodeus' view of the interior life there, and live it over again with him. The Baroness, in red silk tempered with snow-white gauze, is beauty and grace itself; her old Mother is a perfect romp of fifteen, or younger; the house is lively with company; the Baron, as we said, speaks little, but to the purpose; is seen sometimes with his pipe, in dressing-gown and red slippers; otherwise the best of landlords. Remarkable figures drop in; generals disabled at Quebec; fashionable gentlemen rusticating in the neighbourhood; Abbés, such as Galiani, Raynal, Morellet; perhaps Grimm and his Epinay; other Philosophes and Philosophesses. Guests too of less dignity, acting rather as butts than as bowmen: for it is the part of every one either to have wit, or to be the cause of having it.

Among these latter, omitting many, there is one whom, for country's sake, we must particularise; an ancient personage, named Hoop (Hope), whom they called *Père Hoop*; by birth a Scotchman. Hoop seems to be a sort of fixture at Grandval, not bowman, therefore butt; and is shot at for his lodging. A most shrivelled, wind-dried, dyspeptic,

chill-shivering individual; Professor of Life-weariness; sits dozing there,—dozes there, however, with one eye open. He submits to be called *Mummy*, without a shrug; cowers over the fire, at the warmest corner. Yet is there a certain sardonic subacidity in Père Hoop; when he slowly unlocks his leathern jaw, we hear him with a sort of pleasure. Hoop has been in various countries and situations; in that croaking metallic voice of his, can tell a distinct story. Diderot apprehended he would one day hang himself: if so, what Museum now holds his remains? The Parent Hoops, it would seem, still dwelt in the city of Edinburgh; he, the second son, as Bourdeaux Merchant, having helped them thither, out of some proud Manorhouse no longer weather-tight. Can any ancient person of that city give us trace of such a man? It must be inquired into. One only of Father Hoop's reminiscences we shall report, as the highest instance on record of a national virtue: At the battle of Prestonpans, a kinsman of Hoop's, a gentleman with gold rings on his fingers, stands fighting and fencing for life with a rough Highlander; the Highlander, by some clever stroke, whisks the jewelled hand clear off, and then—picks it up from the ground, sticks it in his sporran for future leisure, and fights on! The force of *vertue*³ could no farther go.

It cannot be uninteresting to the general reader to learn, that in the last days of October, in the year of grace 1770, Denis Diderot over-ate himself (as he was in the habit of doing), at Grandval; and had an obstinate 'indigestion of bread.' He writes to Grimm that it is the worst of all indigestions: to his fair Voland that it lay more than fifteen hours on his stomach, with a weight like to crush the life out of him; would neither *remonter* nor *descendre*; nor indeed

³ *Virtus* (properly manliness, the chief duty of man) meant, in old Rome, *power of fighting*; means, in modern Rome, *connoisseurship*; in Scotland, *thrift*.—ED.

stir a hairsbreadth for warm water, *de quelque côté que je la*
(the warm water) *prisse.*

*Clysterium donare,
Ensuita purgare !*

Such things, we grieve to say, are of frequent occurrence ; the Holbachian table is all-too plenteous ; there are cooks too, we know, who boast of their diabolic ability to cause the patient, by successive intensations of their art, to eat with new and ever-new appetite, till he explode on the spot. Diderot writes to his fair one, that his clothes will hardly button, that he is thus ‘stuffed’ and thus ; and so indigestion succeeds indigestion. Such Narratives fill the heart of sensibility with amazement ; nor to the woes that chequer this imperfect, caco-gastric state of existence is the tear wanting.

The society of Grandval cannot be accounted very dull : nevertheless let no man regretfully compare it with any neighbourhood he may have drawn by lot, in the present day ; or even with any no-neighbourhood, if that be his affliction. The gaiety at Grandval was of the kind that could not last. Were it not that some Belief is left in Mankind, how could the sport of emitting Unbelief continue ? On which ground indeed, Swift, in his masterly argument ‘Against abolishing the Christian Religion,’ urges, not without pathos, that innumerable men of wit, enjoying a comfortable status by virtue of jokes on the Catechism, would hereby be left without pabulum, the staff of life cut away from their hand. The Holbachs were blind to this consideration ; and joked away, as if it would last forever. So too with regard to Obscene Talk : where were the merit of a riotous Mother-in-law saying and doing, in public, these never-imagined scandals, had not a cunningly-devised fable

of Modesty been set afloat; were there not some remnants of Modesty still extant among the unphilosophic classes? The Samoeids (according to Travellers) have few double-meanings; among stall-cattle the witty effect of such is lost altogether. Be advised, then, foolish old woman! ‘Burn not thy bed;’ the light of *it* will soon go out, and then?—Apart from the common household topics, which the ‘daily household epochs’ bring with them everywhere, two main elements, we regret to say, come to light in the conversation at Grandval; these, with a spicing of Noble-sentiment, are, unfortunately, Blasphemy and Bawdry. Whereby, at this distance, the whole matter grows to look poor and effete; and we can honestly rejoice that it all *has* been, and need not be again.

But now, hastening back to Paris, friend Diderot finds proof-sheets enough on his desk, and notes, and invitations, and applications from distressed men of letters; nevertheless runs over, in the first place, to seek news from the Voland; will then see what is to be done. He writes much; talks and visits much: besides the Savans, Artists, spiritual Notabilities, domestic or migratory, of the period, he has a liberal allowance of unnotable Associates; especially a whole bevy of young or oldish, mostly rather spiteful Women; in whose gossip he is perfect. We hear the rustling of their silks, the clack of their pretty tongues, tittle-tattle ‘like their pattens when they walk;’ and the sound of it, fresh as yesterday, through this long vista of Time, has become significant, almost prophetic. Life could not hang heavy on Diderot’s hands: he is a vivid, open, all-embracing creature; could have found occupation anywhere; has occupation here forced on him, enough and to spare. ‘He had ‘much to do, and did much of his own,’ says Mademoiselle; ‘yet three-fourths of his life were employed in helping who-

‘soever had need of his purse, of his talents, of his management: his study, for the five-and-twenty years I knew it, was like a well-frequented shop, where, as one customer went, another came.’ He could not find in his heart to refuse any one. He has reconciled Brothers, sought out Tutorages, settled Lawsuits; solicited Pensions; advised, and refreshed hungry Authors, instructed ignorant ones: he has written advertisements for incipient helpless Grocers; he once wrote the dedication (to a pious Duc d’Orléans) of a lampoon against himself,—and so raised some five-and-twenty gold louis for the famishing lampooner. For all these things, let not the light Diderot want his reward with us! Other reward, except from himself, he got none; but often the reverse; as in his little Drama, *La Pièce et le Prologue*, may be seen humorously and good-humouredly set forth under his own hand. Indeed, his clients, by a vast majority, were of the scoundrel species; in any case, Denis knew well, that to expect gratitude, is to deserve ingratitude.—‘Rivière well contented’ (hear Mademoiselle) ‘now thanks my father, both for his services and his advices; sits chatting another quarter of an hour, and then takes leave; my father shows him down. As they are on the stairs, Rivière stops, turns round, and asks: “M. Diderot, are you acquainted with Natural History?”—“Why, a little; I know an aloe from a sago, a pigeon from a colibri.”—“Do you know the history of the *Formica-leo*?”—“No.”—“It is a little insect of great industry: it digs a hole in the ground like a reversed funnel; covers the top with fine light sand; entices foolish insects to it; takes them, sucks them, then says to them: M. Diderot, I have the honour to wish you good-day.” My father stood laughing like to split at this adventure.’

Thus, amid labour and recreation; questionable Litera-

ture, unquestionable Loves; eating and digesting, better or worse; in gladness and vexation of spirit, in laughter ending in sighs, does Diderot pass his days. He has been hard toiled, but then well flattered, and is nothing of a hypochondriac. What little service renown can do him, may now be considered as done: he is in the centre of the literature, science, art, of his nation; not numbered among the Academical Forty, yet in his heterodox heart entitled to be almost proud of the exclusion; successful in Criticism, successful in Philosophism, nay, highest of sublunary glories, successful in the Theatre; vanity may whisper, if she please, that, excepting the unattainable Voltaire alone, he is the first of Frenchmen. High heads are in correspondence with him the low-born; from Catherine the Empress to Philidor the Chess-player, he is in honoured relation with all manner of men; with scientific Buffons, Eulers, D'Alemberts; with artistic Falconnets, Vanloos, Riccobonis, Garricks. He was ambitious of being a Philosophe; and now the whole fast-growing sect of Philosophes look up to him as their head and mystagogue. To Denis Diderot, when he stepped out of the Langres Diligence at the College d'Harcourt; or afterwards, when he walked in the subterranean shades of Rascaldom, with uneasy steps over the burning marl, a much smaller destiny would have seemed desirable.

Within doors, again, matters stand rather disjointed, as surely they might well do: however, Madame Diderot is always true and assiduous; if one Daughter talk enthusiastically, and at length (though her father has written the *Religieuse*) die mad in a convent, the other, a quick, intelligent, graceful girl, is waxing into womanhood, and takes after the father's Philosophism, leaving the mother's Piety far enough aside. To which elements of mixed good and evil from without, add this so incalculably favourable one from

within, that of all literary men Diderot is the least a self-listener; none of your puzzling, repenting, forecasting, earnest-bilious temperaments, but sanguineous-lymphatic every fibre of him, living lightly from hand to mouth, in a world mostly painted rose-colour.

The *Encyclopédie*, after nigh thirty years of endeavour, to which only the Siege of Troy may offer some faint parallel, is finished. Scattered Compositions of all sorts, printed or manuscript, making many Volumes, lie also finished; the Philosophe has reaped no golden harvest from them. He is getting old: can live out of debt, but is still poor. Thinking to settle his daughter in marriage, he must resolve to sell his Library; money is not otherwise to be raised. Here, however, the Northern Cleopatra steps imperially forward; purchases his Library for its full value; gives him a handsome pension, as Librarian to keep it for her; and pays him moreover fifty years thereof by advance in ready-money. This we call imperial (in a world so necessitous as ours), though the whole munificence did not, we find, cost above three thousand pounds; a trifle to the Empress of All the Russias. In fact, it is about the sum your first-rate king eats, as board-wages, in one day; who, however, has seldom sufficient; not to speak of charitable overplus. In admiration of his Empress, the vivid Philosophe is now louder than ever; he even breaks forth into rather husky singing. Who shall blame him? The Northern Cleopatra (whom, in any case, he must regard with other eyes than we) has stretched out a generous helping hand to him, where otherwise there was no help, but only hindrance and injury: all men will, and should, more or less, obey the proverb, to praise the fair as their own market goes in it.

One of the last great scenes in Diderot's Life is his personal visit to this Benefactress. There is but one Letter

from him with Petersburg for date, and that of ominous brevity. The *Philosophe* was of open, unheeded, free-and-easy disposition; Prince and Polisson were singularly alike to him; it was 'hail fellow well met,' with every Son of Adam, be his clothes of one stuff or the other. Such a man could be no court-sycophant, was ill-calculated to succeed at court. We can imagine that the Neva-colic, and the character of the Neva-water, were not the only things hurtful to his nerves there. For King Denis, who had dictated such wonderful anti-regalities in the Abbé Raynal's *History*,⁴ and himself, in a moment of sibylism, emitted that surprising announcement, surpassing all yet uttered or utterable in the Tyrtæan way, how

*Ses mains (the freeman's) ourderaient les entrailles du prêtre,
Au défaut d'un cordon, pour étrangler les rois ;*

for such a one, the climate of the Neva must have had something oppressive in it. The *entrailles du prêtre* were, indeed, much at his service here, could he get clutch of them; but only for musical philosophe fiddle-strings; nowise for a *cordon*!

Nevertheless, Cleopatra is an uncommon woman (or rather an uncommon man), and can put-up with many things;

⁴ "But who *dare* stand for this?" would Diderot exclaim. "I will, I!" eagerly responded the Abbé: "do but proceed." (*A la Mémoire de Diderot*, by De Meister.)—Was the following one of the passages?

'Happily these perverse instructors' of Kings 'are chastised, sooner or later, by the ingratitude and contempt of their pupils. Happily, these pupils too, miserable in the bosom of grandeur, are tormented all their life by a deep *ennui*, which they cannot banish from their palaces. Happily, the religious prejudices, which have been planted in their souls, return on them to affright them. Happily, the mournful silence of their people teaches them, from time to time, the deep hatred that is borne them. Happily, they are too cowardly to despise that hatred. Happily (*heureusement*), after a life which no mortal, not even the meanest of their subjects, would accept, if he knew all its wretchedness, they find black inquietude, terror and despair, seated on the pillow of their death-bed (*les noirs inquiétudes, la terreur et le désespoir assis au chevet de leur lit de mort*).'¹—Surely, kings have poor times of it, to be run foul of by the like of thee'!

and, in a gentle skilful way, make the crooked straight. As her Philosophe presents himself in common apparel, she sends him a splendid court-suit; and as he can now enter in a civilised manner, she sees him often, confers with him largely: by happy chance, Grimm too at length arrives; and the winter passes without accident. Returning home in triumph, he can express himself contented, charmed with his reception; has mineral specimens, and all manner of hyperborean memorials for friends; unheard-of things to tell; how he crossed the bottomless half-thawed Dwina, with the water boiling up round his wheels, the ice bending like leather, yet crackling like mere ice,—and shuddered, and got through safe; how he was carried, coach and all, into the ferry-boat at Mittau, on thirty wild men's backs, who floundered in the mud, and nigh broke his shoulder-blade; how he investigated Holland, and had conversed with Empresses, and High Mightinesses, and principalities and powers; and so seen and conquered, for his own spiritual behoof, several of the Seven Wonders.

But, alas! his health is broken; old age is knocking at the gate, like an importunate creditor, who has warrant for entering. The radiant lightly-bounding soul is now getting all dim and stiff, and heavy with sleep; Diderot too must adjust himself, for the hour draws nigh. These last years he passes retired and private, not idle or miserable. Philosophy or Philosophism has nowise lost its charm; whatsoever so much as calls itself Philosopher can interest him. Thus poor Seneca, on occasion of some new Version of his Works, having come before the public, and been roughly dealt with, Diderot, with a long, last, concentrated effort, writes his *Vie de Sénèque*; struggling to make the hollow solid. Which, alas, after all his tinkering still sounds hollow; and notable Seneca, so wistfully desirous to stand well

with Truth, and yet not ill with Nero, is and remains only our perhaps niceliest-proportioned Half-and-half, the plausiblest Plausible on record; no great man, no true man, no man at all; yet how much lovelier than such,—as the mild-spoken, tolerating, charity-sermoning, immaculate Bishop Dogbolt to some rude, self-helping, sharp-tongued Apostle Paul! Under which view, indeed, Seneca (though surely erroneously, for the origin of the thing was different) has been called, in this generation, ‘the father of all such as wear shovel-hats.’

The *Vie de Sénèque*, as we said, was Diderot’s last effort. It remains only to be added of him, that he too died; a lingering but quiet death, which took place on the 30th of July 1784. He once quotes from Montaigne the following, as Sceptic’s viaticum: ‘I plunge stupidly, head foremost, ‘into this dumb Deep, which swallows me, and chokes me, ‘in a moment,—full of insipidity and indolence. Death, ‘which is but a quarter of an hour’s suffering, without consequence and without injury, does not require peculiar ‘precepts.’ It was Diderot’s allotment to die with all due ‘stupidity:’ he was leaning on his elbows; had eaten an apricot two minutes before, and answered his wife’s remonstrances with: “*Mais que diable de mal veux-tu que cela me fasse?*” (How the deuce can that hurt me?)” She spoke again, and he answered not. His House, which the curious will visit when they go to Paris, was in the Rue Taranne, at the intersection thereof with the Rue Saint-Benoît. The dust that was once his Body went to mingle with the common earth, in the church of Saint-Roch; his Life, the wondrous manifold Force that was in him, that was He,—returned to ETERNITY, and *is* there, and continues there!

Two things, as we saw, are celebrated of Diderot. First,

that he had the most encyclopedical head ever seen in this world: second, that he talked as never man talked;—properly, as never man his admirers had heard, or as no man living in Paris then. That is to say, his was at once the widest, fertilest, and-readiest of minds.

With regard to the Encyclopedical Head, suppose it to mean that he was of such vivacity as to admit, and look upon with interest, almost all things which the circle of Existence could offer him; in which sense, this exaggerated laudation, of Encyclopedism, is not without its fraction of meaning. Of extraordinary openness and compass we must grant the mind of Diderot to be; of a susceptibility, quick activity; even naturally of a depth, and in its practical realised shape, of a universality, which bring it into kindred with the highest order of minds. On all forms of this wondrous Creation he can look with loving wonder; whatsoever thing stands there, has some brotherhood with him, some beauty and meaning for him. Neither is the faculty to see and interpret wanting; as, indeed, this faculty to *see* is inseparable from that other faculty to *look*, from that true wish to look; moreover (under another figure), Intellect is not a *tool*, but a *hand* that can handle any tool. Nay, in Diderot we may discern a far deeper universality than that shown, or showable, in Lebreton's *Encyclopédie*; namely, a poetical; for, in slight gleams, this too manifests itself. A universality less of the head than of the character; such, we say, is traceable in this man, at lowest the power to have acquired such. Your true Encyclopedical is the Homer, the Shakspeare; every genuine Poet is a living embodied, real Encyclopedia, —in more or fewer volumes; were his experience, his insight of details, never so limited, the whole world lies imaged as a whole within him; whosoever has not seized the whole cannot yet speak truly (much less can he speak *musically*,

which is harmoniously, *concordantly*) of any part, but will perpetually need new guidance, rectification. The fit use of such a man is as hodman; not feeling the plan of the edifice, let him carry stones to it; if he *build* the smallest stone, it is likeliest to be wrong, and cannot continue there.

But the truth is, as regards Diderot, this saying of the encyclopedical head comes mainly from his having edited a Bookseller's Encyclopedia, and can afford us little direction. Looking into the man, and omitting his trade, we find him by nature gifted in a high degree with openness and versatility, yet nowise in the highest degree; alas, in quite another degree than that. Nay, if it be meant farther that in practice, as a writer and thinker, he has taken in the Appearances of Life and the World, and images them back with such freedom, clearness, fidelity, as we have not many times witnessed elsewhere, as we have not various times seen infinitely surpassed elsewhere,—this same encyclopedical praise must altogether be denied him. Diderot's habitual world, we must, on the contrary, say, is a half-world, distorted into looking like a whole; it is properly, a poor, fractional, insignificant world; partial, inaccurate, perverted from end to end. Alas, it was the destiny of the man to live as a Polemic; to be born also in the morning-tide and first splendour of the Mechanical Era; not to know, with the smallest assurance or continuance, that in the Universe other than a mechanical meaning could exist; which force of destiny acting on him through his whole course, we have obtained what now stands before us: no Seer, but only possibilities of a Seer, transient irradiations of a Seer, looking through the organs of a Philosophe.

These two considerations, which indeed are properly but one (for a thinker, especially of French birth, in the Mechanical Era, could not be other than a Polemic), must never for

a moment be left out of view in judging the works of Diderot. It is a great truth, one side of a great truth, that the Man makes the Circumstances, and spiritually as well as economically is the artificer of his own fortune. But there is another side of the same truth, that the man's circumstances are the element he is appointed to live and work in; that he by necessity takes his complexion, vesture, embodiment, from these, and is in all practical manifestations modified by them almost without limit; so that in another no less genuine sense, it can be said Circumstances make the Man. Now, if it continually behoves us to insist on the former truth towards ourselves, it equally behoves us to bear in mind the latter when we judge of other men. The most gifted soul, appearing in France in the Eighteenth Century, can as little embody himself in the intellectual vesture of an Athenian Plato, as in the grammatical one; his thoughts can no more be Greek, than his language can. He thinks of the things belonging to the French eighteenth century, and in the dialect he has learned there; in the light, and under the conditions prescribed there. Thus, as the most original, resolute and self-directing of all the Moderns has written: 'Let a man be but born ten years sooner, or ten years later, his whole aspect and performance shall be different.'

Grant, doubtless, that a certain perennial Spirit, true for all times and all countries, can and must look through the thinking of certain men, be it in what dialect soever: understand meanwhile that strictly this holds only of the highest order of men, and cannot be exacted of inferior orders; among whom, if the most sedulous, loving inspection disclose any even secondary symptoms of such a Spirit, it ought to seem enough. Let us remember well that the high-gifted, high-striving Diderot was born in the point of Time and of Space, when of all uses he could turn himself to, of all dialects

speaking in, this of Polemical Philosophism, and no other, seemed the most promising and fittest. Let us remember too, that no earnest Man, in any Time, ever spoke what was wholly meaningless; that, in all human convictions, much more in all human practices, there was a true side, a fraction of truth; which fraction is precisely the thing we want to extract from them, if we want anything at all to do with them.

Such palliative considerations (which, for the rest, concern not Diderot, now departed, and indifferent to them, but only ourselves who could wish to *see* him, and not to mis-see him) are essential, we say, through our whole survey of his Opinions and Proceedings, generally so alien to our own; but most of all in reference to his head Opinion, properly the source of all the rest, and more shocking, even horrible, to us than all the rest: we mean his Atheism. David Hume, dining once in company where Diderot was, remarked that he did not think there were any Atheists. "Count us," said a certain Monsieur —: they were eighteen. "Well," said the Monsieur —, "it is pretty fair if you have fished-out fifteen at the first cast; and three others who know not what to think of it." In fact, the case was common: your *Philosophe* of the first water had grown to reckon Atheism a necessary accomplishment. Gowkthrapple Naigeon, as we saw, had made himself very perfect therein.

Diderot was an Atheist, then; stranger still, a proselytising Atheist, who esteemed the creed worth earnest reiterated preaching, and enforcement with all vigour! The unhappy man had 'sailed through the Universe of Worlds' and found no Maker thereof; had descended to the abysses 'where Being no longer casts its shadow, and felt only the' rain-drops trickle down; and seen only the gleaming rain-bow of Creation, which originated from no Sun; and heard

‘only the everlasting storm which no one governs; and ‘looked upwards for the DIVINE EYE, and beheld only the ‘black, bottomless, glaring DEATH’S EYE-SOCKET:’ such, with all his wide voyagings, was the philosophic fortune he had realised.

Sad enough, horrible enough: yet instead of shrieking over it, or howling and Ernulphus’-cursing over it, let us, as the more profitable method, keep our composure, and inquire a little, What possibly it may mean? The whole phenomenon, as seems to us, will explain itself from the fact above insisted on, that Diderot was a Polemic of decided character, in the Mechanical Age. With great expenditure of words and froth, in arguments as waste, wild-weltering, delirious-dismal as the chaos they would demonstrate; which arguments one now knows not whether to laugh at or to weep at, and almost does both,—have Diderot and his sect perhaps made this apparent to all who examine it: That in the French System of Thought (called also the Scotch, and still familiar enough everywhere, which for want of a better title we have named the Mechanical), there is no room for a Divinity; that to him, for whom *intellect*, or the power of knowing and believing, is still synonymous with *logic*, or the mere power of arranging and communicating, there is absolutely no proof discoverable of a Divinity; and such a man has nothing for it but either, if he be of half spirit as is the frequent case, to trim despicably all his days between two opinions; or else, if he be of whole spirit, to anchor himself on the rock or quagmire of Atheism,—and farther, should he see fit, proclaim to others that there is good riding there. So much may Diderot have demonstrated: a conclusion at which we nowise turn pale. Was it much to know that Metaphysical Speculation, by nature, whirls round in endless Maelstroms, both ‘creating and swallow-

ing—itself? For so wonderful a self-swallowing product of the Spirit of the Time, could any result to arrive at be fitter than this of the ETERNAL No? We thank Heaven that the result *is* finally arrived at; and so now we can look out for something other and farther. But above all things, *proof* of a God? A *probable* God! The smallest of Finites struggling to *prove* to itself, that is to say if we will consider it, to picture-out and arrange as diagram, and *include* within itself, the Highest Infinite; in *which*, by hypothesis, *it* lives, and moves, and has its being! This, we conjecture, will one day seem a much more miraculous miracle than that negative result it has arrived at,—or any other result a still absurder chance might have led it to. He who, in some singular Time of the World's History, were reduced to wander about, in stooping posture, with painfully constructed sulphur-match and farthing rushlight (as Gowk-thrapple Naigeon), or smoky tar-link (as Denis Diderot), searching for the Sun, and did not find it; were *he* wonderful and his failure; or the singular Time, and its having put him on that search?

Two small consequences, then, we fancy, may have followed, or be following, from poor Diderot's Atheism. First, that all speculations of the sort we call Natural Theology, endeavouring to prove the beginning of all Belief by some Belief earlier than the beginning, are barren, ineffectual, impossible; and may, so soon as otherwise it is profitable, be abandoned. Of final causes, man, by the nature of the case, can *prove* nothing; knows them, if he know anything of them, not by glimmering flint-sparks of Logic, but by an infinitely higher light of intuition; never long, by Heaven's mercy, wholly eclipsed in the human soul; and (under the name of Faith, as regards this matter) familiar to us now, historically or in conscious possession, for upwards of four

thousand years. To all open men it will indeed always be a favourite contemplation, that of watching the ways of Being, how animate adjusts itself to inanimate, rational to irrational, and this that we name Nature is not a desolate phantasm of a chaos, but a wondrous existence and reality. If, moreover, in those same 'marks of design,' as he has called them, the contemplative man find new evidence of a designing Maker, be it well for him: meanwhile, surely one would think, the still clearer evidence lay nearer home,—in the contemplative man's own head that *seeks* after such! In which point of view our extant Natural Theologies, as our innumerable Evidences of the Christian Religion, and suchlike, may, in reference to the strange season they appear in, have a certain value, and be worth printing and reprinting; only let us understand for whom, and how, they are valuable; and be nowise wroth with the poor Atheist, whom they have not convinced, and could not, and should not convince.

The second consequence seems to be, that this whole current hypothesis of the Universe being 'a Machine,' and then of an Architect, who constructed it, sitting as it were apart, and guiding it, and *seeing* it go,—may turn-out an inanity and nonentity; not much longer tenable: with which result likewise we shall, in the quietest manner, reconcile ourselves. 'Think ye,' says Goethe, 'that God made the 'Universe, and then let it run round his finger (*am Finger laufen liesse*)?' On the whole, that Metaphysical hurly-burly, of our poor jarring, self-listening Time, ought at length to compose itself: that seeking for a God *there*, and not *here*; everywhere outwardly in physical Nature, and not inwardly in our own Soul, where alone He is to be found by us,—begins to get wearisome. Above all, that 'faint possible Theism,' which now forms our common English

creed, cannot be too soon swept out of the world. What is the nature of that individual, who with hysterical violence theoretically asserts a God, perhaps a revealed Symbol and Worship of God; and for the rest, in thought, word and conduct, meet with him where you will, is found living as if his theory were some polite figure of speech, and his theoretical God a mere distant Simulacrum, with whom he, for his part, had nothing farther to do? Fool! The ETERNAL is no Simulacrum; God is not only There, but Here or nowhere, in that life-breath of thine, in that act and thought of thine,—and thou wert wise to look to it. If there is no God, as the fool hath said in his heart, then live on with thy decencies, and lip-homages, and inward greed, and falsehood, and all the hollow cunningly-devised halfness that recommends thee to the Mammon of this world: if there is a God, we say, look to it! But in either case, what art thou? The Atheist is false; yet is there, as we see, a fraction of truth in him; he is true compared with thee; thou, unhappy mortal, livest wholly in a lie, art wholly a lie.

So that Diderot's Atheism comes, if not to much, yet to something: we learn this from it, and from what it stands connected with, and may represent for us, That the Mechanical System of Thought is, in its essence, Atheistic; that whosoever will admit no organ of truth but logic, and nothing to exist but what can be argued of, must even content himself with this sad result, as the only solid one he can arrive at; and so with the best grace he can, 'of the æther make a gas, of God a force, of the second world a 'coffin'; of man an aimless nondescript, 'little better than 'a kind of vermin.' If Diderot, by bringing matters to this parting of the roads, have enabled or helped us to strike into the truer and better road, let him have our thanks for

it. As to what remains, be pity our only feeling; was not his creed miserable enough; nay, moreover, did not he bear its miserableness, so to speak, in our stead, so that it need now be no longer borne by any one?

In this same for him unavoidable circumstance, of the age he lived in, and the system of thought universal then, will be found the key to Diderot's whole spiritual character and procedure; the excuse for much in him that to us is false and perverted. Beyond the meagre 'rushlight of closet-logic,' Diderot recognised no guidance. That 'the Highest cannot be spoken of in words,' was a truth he had not dreamt of. Whatsoever thing he cannot debate of, we might almost say measure and weigh, and carry off with him to be eaten and enjoyed, is simply not there for him. He dwelt all his days in the 'thin rind of the Conscious;' the deep fathomless domain of the Unconscious, whereon the other rests and has its meaning, was not, under any shape, surmised by him. Thus must the Sanctuary of Man's Soul stand perennially shut against this man; where his hand ceased to grope, the World ended: within such strait conditions had he to live and labour. And naturally to distort and dislocate, more or less, all things he laboured on: for whosoever, in one way or another, recognises not that 'Divine Idea of the World, which lies at the bottom of Appearances,' can rightly interpret no Appearance; and whatsoever spiritual thing he does, must do it partially, do it falsely.

Mournful enough, accordingly, is the account which Diderot has given himself of Man's Existence; on the duties, relations, possessions whereof he had been a sedulous thinker. In every conclusion we have this fact of his Mechanical culture. Coupled too with another fact honourable to him: that he stuck not at half measures; but resolutely drove-on to the result, and held by it. So that we cannot call him

a Sceptic; he has merited the more decisive name of Denier. He may be said to have denied that there was any the smallest Sacredness in Man, or in the Universe; and to have both speculated and lived on this singular footing. We behold in him the notable extreme of a man guiding himself with the least spiritual Belief that thinking man perhaps ever had. Religion, in all recognisable shapes and senses, he has done what man can do to clear out of him. He believes that pleasure is pleasant; that a lie is unbelievable; and there his *credo* terminates; nay there, what perhaps makes his case almost unique, his very fancy seems to fall silent.

For a consequent man, all possible spiritual perversions are included under that grossest one of 'proselytising Atheism;' the rest, of what kind and degree soever, cannot any longer astonish us. Diderot has them of all kinds and degrees: indeed, we might say, the French Philosophe (take him at his *word*, for inwardly much that was foreign adhered to him, do what he could) has emitted a Scheme of the World, to which all that Oriental Mullah, Bonze or Talapoin have done in that kind is poor and feeble. Omitting his whole unparalleled Cosmogonies and Physiologies; coming to his much milder Tables of the Moral Law, we shall glance here but at one minor external item, the relation between man and man; and at only one branch of this, and with all slightness, the relation of covenants; for example, the most important of these, Marriage.

Diderot has convinced himself, and indeed, as above became plain enough, acts on the conviction, that Marriage, contract it, solemnise it in what way you will, involves a solecism which reduces the amount of it to simple zero. It is a suicidal covenant; annuls itself in the very forming. 'Thou makest a vow,' says he, twice or thrice, as if the

argument were a clencher, 'thou makest a vow of eternal 'constancy under a rock, which is even then crumbling 'away.' True, O Denis! the rock crumbles away: all things are changing; man changes faster than most of them. That, in the mean while, an Unchangeable lies under all this, and looks forth, solemn and benign, through the whole destiny and workings of man, is another truth; which no Mechanical Philosophe, in the dust of his logic-mill, can be expected to grind-out for himself. Man changes, and will change: the question then arises, Is it wise in him to tumble forth, in headlong obedience to this love of change; is it so much as possible for him? Among the dualisms of man's wholly dualistic nature, this we might fancy was an observable one: that along with his unceasing tendency to change, there is a no less ineradicable tendency to persevere. Were man only here to change, let him, far from marrying, cease even to hedge-in fields, and plough them; before the autumn season, he may have lost the whim of reaping them. Let him return to the nomadic state, and set his house on wheels; nay there too a certain restraint must curb his love of change, or his cattle will perish by incessant driving, without grazing in the intervals. O Denis, what things thou babblest, in thy sleep! How, in this world of perpetual flux, shall man secure himself the smallest foundation, except hereby alone: that he take preassurance of his Fate; that in this and the other high act of his life, his Will, with all solemnity, *abdicate* its right to change; voluntarily become involuntary, and say once for all, Be there then no farther dubitation on it! Nay, the poor unheroic craftsman; that very stocking-weaver, on whose loom thou now as amateur weavest: must not even he do as much,—when he signed his apprentice-indentures? The fool! who had such a relish in himself for all things, for kingship and

emperors; yet made a vow (under a penalty of death by hunger) of eternal constancy to stocking-weaving. Yet otherwise, were no thriving craftsmen possible; only botchers, bunglers, transitory nondescripts; unfed, mostly gallows-feeding. But, on the whole, what feeling it was in the ancient devout deep soul, which of Marriage made a *Sacrament*: this, of all things in the world, is what Denis will think of for æons, without discovering. Unless, perhaps, it were to increase the vestry-fees?

Indeed, it must be granted, nothing yet seen or dreamt of can surpass the liberality of friend Denis as *magister morum*; nay, often our poor Philosophe feels called on, in an age of such Spartan rigour, to step forth into the public Stews, and emit his inspiriting *Macte virtute!* there. Whither let the curious in such matters follow him: we, having work elsewhere, wish him 'good journey,'—or rather 'safe return.' Of Diderot's indelicacy and indecency there is for us but little to say. Diderot is not what we call indelicate and indecent; he is utterly unclean, scandalous, shameless, sans-culottic-samoeidic. To declare with lyric fury that this is wrong; or with historic calmness, that a pig of sensibility would go distracted did you accuse him of it, may, especially in countries where 'indecent exposure' is cognisable at police-offices, be considered superfluous. The only question is one in Natural History: Whence comes it? What may a man, not otherwise without elevation of mind, of kindly character, of immense professed philanthropy, and doubtless of extraordinary insight, mean thereby? To us it is but another illustration of the fearless, all-for-logic, thoroughly consistent, Mechanical Thinker. It coheres well enough with Diderot's theory of man; that there is nothing of sacred either in man or around man; and that chimeras are chimerical. How shall he for whom nothing, that cannot

be jargoned of in debating-clubs, exists, have any faintest forecast of the depth, significance, divineness of SILENCE; of the sacredness of 'Secrets known to all'?

Nevertheless, Nature is great; and Denis was among her nobler productions. To a soul of his sort something like what we call Conscience could nowise be wanting: the feeling of Moral Relation; of the Infinite character thereof, as the essence and soul of all else that can be felt or known, must needs assert itself in him. Yet how assert itself? An Infinitude to one in whose whole Synopsis of the Universe no Infinite stands marked? Wonderful enough is Diderot's method; and yet not wonderful, for we see it, and have always seen it, daily. Since there is nothing sacred in the Universe, whence this sacredness of what you call Virtue? Whence or how comes it that you, Denis Diderot, *must* not do a wrong thing; could not, without some qualm, speak, for example, one Lie, to gain Mahomet's Paradise with all its houris? There is no resource for it, but to get into that interminable ravelment of Reward and Approval, virtue being its own reward; and assert louder and louder,—contrary to the stern experience of all men, from the Divine Man, expiring with agony of bloody sweat on the accursed tree, down to us two, O reader (if we have ever done one Duty),—that Virtue is synonymous with Pleasure. Alas! was Paul, an Apostle of the Gentiles, virtuous; and was virtue its own reward, when *his* approving conscience told him that he was 'the chief of sinners,' and if bounded to this life alone, 'of all men the most miserable'? Or has that same so sublime Virtue, at bottom, little to do with Pleasure, if with far other things? Are Eudoxia, and Eusebeia, and Euthanasia, and all the rest of them, of small account to Eubosia and Eupepsia; and the pains of any moderately-paced Career of Vice, Denis himself being judge, as a drop in the

bucket to the 'Career of Indigestions'? This is what Denis never in this world will grant.

But what, then, will he do? One of two things: admit, with Grimm, that there are 'two justices,'—which may be called by many handsome names, but properly are nothing but the pleasant justice, and the unpleasant; whereof only the former is binding! Herein, however, Nature has been unkind to Denis; he is not a literary court-toadeater; but a free, genial, even poetic creature. There remains, therefore, nothing but the second expedient: to 'assert louder and louder;' in other words, to become a Philosophe-Sentimentalist. Most wearisome, accordingly, is the perpetual clatter kept up here about *vertu*, *honnêteté*, *grandeur*, *sensibilité*, *âmes nobles*; how unspeakably good it is to be virtuous, how pleasant, how sublime:—In the Devil and his grandmother's name, *be* virtuous; and let us have an end of it! In such sort (we will, nevertheless, joyfully recognise) does great Nature in spite of all contradictions, declare her royalty, her divineness; and, for the poor Mechanical Philosophe, has prepared, since the substance is hidden from him, a shadow wherewith he can be cheered.

In fine, to our ill-starred Mechanical Philosophe-Sentimentalist, with his loud preaching and rather poor performing, shall we not, in various respects, 'thankfully stretch-out the hand'? In all ways 'it was necessary that the logical side of things should likewise be made available.' On the whole, wondrous higher developments of much, of Morality among the rest, are visible in the course of the world's doings, at this day. A plausible prediction were that the Ascetic System is not to regain its exclusive dominancy. Ever, indeed, must Self-denial, '*Annihilation of Self*,' be the beginning of all moral action: meanwhile, he that looks well, may discern filaments of a nobler System, wherein this

lies included as one harmonious element. Who knows, for example, what new unfoldings and complex adjustments await us, before the true relation of moral Greatness to moral Correctness, and their proportional value, can be established? How, again, is perfect tolerance for the Wrong to coexist with ever-present conviction that Right stands related to it, as a God does to a Devil,—an Infinite to an opposite Infinite? How, in a word, through what tumultuous vicissitudes, after how many false partial efforts, deepening the confusion, shall it at length be made manifest, and kept continually manifest, to the hearts of men, that the Good is not properly the highest, but the Beautiful; that the true Beautiful (differing from the false, as Heaven does from Vauxhall) comprehends in it the Good?—In some future century, it may be found that Denis Diderot, acting and professing, in wholeness and with full conviction, what the immense multitude act in halfness and without conviction, has, though by strange inverse methods, forwarded the result. It was long ago written, the Omnipotent ‘maketh the wrath of the wicked,’ the folly of the foolish, ‘to praise Him.’ In any case, Diderot acted it, and not we; Diderot bears it, and not we: peace be with Diderot!

The other branch of his renown is excellence as a Talker. Or in wider view, think his admirers, his philosophy was not more surpassing than his delivery thereof. What his philosophy amounts to, we have been examining: but now, that in this other conversational province he was eminent, is easily believed. A frank, ever-hoping, social character; a mind full of knowledge, full of fervour; of great compass, of great depth; ever on the alert: such a man could not have other than a ‘mouth of gold.’ It is still plain, whatsoever thing imaged itself before him was imaged in the most lucent clearness; was rendered back, with light labour, in corresponding

clearness. Whether, at the same time, Diderot's conversation, relatively so superior, deserved the intrinsic character of supreme, may admit of question. The worth of words spoken depends, after all, on the wisdom that resides in them; and in Diderot's words there was often too little of this. Vivacity, far-darting brilliancy, keenness of theoretic vision, paradoxical ingenuity, gaiety, even touches of humour; all this must have been here: whosoever had preferred sincerity, earnestness, depth of practical rather than theoretic insight, with not less of impetuosity, of clearness and sureness, with humour, emphasis, or such other melody or rhythm as that utterance demanded,—must have come over to London; and, with forbearant submissiveness, listened to our Johnson. Had we the stronger man, then? Be it rather, as in that duel of Cœur-de-Lion with the light, nimble, yet also invincible Saladin, that each nation had the strength which most befitted it.

Closely connected with this power of conversation is Diderot's facility of composition. A talent much celebrated; numerous really surprising proofs whereof are on record: how he wrote long works within the week; sometimes within almost the four-and-twenty hours. Unhappily, enough still remains to make such feats credible. Most of Diderot's Works bear the clearest traces of extemporaneousness; *stans pede in uno!* They are much liker printed talk, than the concentrated well-considered utterance which, from a man of that weight, we expect to see set in types. It is said, 'he wrote good pages, but could not write a good book.' Substitute *did not* for *could not*; and there is truth in the saying. Clearness, as has been observed, comprehensibility at a glance, is the character of whatever Diderot wrote: a clearness which, in visual objects, rises into the region of the Artistic, and resembles that of Richardson or

Defoe. Yet, grant that he makes his meaning clear, what is the nature of that meaning itself? Alas, for most part, only a hasty, flimsy, superficial meaning, with gleams of a deeper vision peering through. More or less of disorder reigns in all Works that Diderot wrote; not order, but the plausible appearance of such: the true heart of the matter is not found; 'he skips deftly along the radii, and skips over the centre, and misses it.'

Thus may Diderot's admired Universality and admired Facility have both turned to disadvantage for him. We speak not of his reception by the world: this indeed is the 'age of specialties;' yet, owing to other causes, Diderot the Encyclopedist had success enough. But, what is of far more importance, his inward growth was marred: the strong tree shot not up in any one noble stem, bearing boughs, and fruit, and shade all round; but spread out horizontally, after a very moderate height, into innumerable branches, not useless, yet of quite secondary use. Diderot could have been an Artist; and he was little better than an Encyclopedic Artisan. No smatterer, indeed; a faithful artisan; of really universal equipment, in his sort: he did the work of many men; yet nothing, or little, which many could not have done.

Accordingly, his Literary Works, now lying finished some fifty years, have already, to the most surprising degree, shrunk in importance. Perhaps no man so much talked of is so little known; to the great majority he is no longer a Reality, but a Hearsay. Such, indeed, partly is the natural fate of Works Polemical, which almost all Diderot's are. The Polemic annihilates his opponent; but in so doing annihilates himself too, and both are swept away to make room for something other and farther. Add to this, the slight-textured transitory character of Diderot's style; and the fact is well enough explained. Meanwhile, let him to

whom it applies consider it; him among whose gifts it was to rise into the Perennial, and who dwelt rather low down in the Ephemeral, and ephemerally fought and scrambled there! Diderot the great has contracted into Diderot the easily-measurable: so must it be with others of the like.

In how many sentences can the net-product of all that tumultuous Atheism, printed over many volumes, be comprised! Nay, the whole *Encyclopédie*, that world's wonder of the eighteenth century, the Belus' Tower of an age of refined Illumination, what has it become? Alas, no stone tower, that will stand there as our strength and defence through all times; but, at best, a wooden *Helepolis* (City-taker), wherein stationed, the Philosophus Policaster has burnt and battered-down many an old ruinous Sorbonne; and which now, when that work is pretty well over, may, in turn, be taken asunder, and used as firewood. The famed Encyclopedical Tree itself has proved an artificial one, and borne no fruit. We mean that, in its nature, it is mechanical only; one of those attempts to parcel-out the invisible mystical Soul of Man, with its *infinitude* of phases and character, into shop-lists of what are called 'faculties,' 'motives,' and suchlike; which attempts may indeed be made with all degrees of insight, from that of a Doctor Spurzheim to that of Denis Diderot or Jeremy Bentham; and prove useful for a day, but for a day only.

Nevertheless it were false to regard Diderot as a Mechanist and nothing more; as one working and grinding blindly in the mill of mechanical Logic, joyful with his lot there, and unconscious of any other. Call him one rather who contributed to deliver us therefrom: both by his manful whole spirit as a Mechanist, which drove all things to their ultimatum and crisis; and even by a dim-struggling faculty, which virtually aimed beyond this. Diderot, we said, was

gifted by Nature for an Artist: strangely flashing through his mechanical encumbrances, are rays of thought, which belong to the Poet, to the Prophet; which, in other environment, could have revealed the deepest to us. Not to seek far, consider this one little sentence, which he makes the last of the dying Sanderson: '*Le temps, la matière et l'espace ne sont peut-être qu'un point* (Time, Matter and Space are 'perhaps but a point)!'

So too in Art, both as a speaker and a doer, he is to be reckoned as one of those who pressed forward irresistibly out of the artificial barren sphere of that time, into a truer genial one. His Dramas, the *Fils Naturel*, the *Père de Famille*, have indeed ceased to live; yet is the attempt towards great things visible in them; the attempt remains to us, and seeks otherwise, and has found, and is finding, fulfilment. Not less in his *Salons* (Judgments of Art-Exhibitions), written hastily for Grimm, and by ill chance on artists of quite secondary character, do we find the freest recognition of whatever excellence there is; nay an impetuous endeavour, not critically, but even creatively, towards something more excellent. Indeed, what with their unrivalled clearness, painting the picture over again for us, so that we too see it, and can judge it; what with their sunny fervour, inventiveness, real artistic genius, which wants nothing but a *hand*, they are, with some few exceptions in the German tongue, the only Pictorial Criticisms we know of worth reading. Here too, as by his own practice in the Dramatic branch of art, Diderot stands forth as the main originator, almost the sole one in his own country, of that many-sided struggle towards what is called Nature, and copying of Nature, and faithfulness to Nature: a deep indispensable truth, subversive of the old error; yet under that figure, only a half-truth, for Art too is Art, as surely

as Nature is Nature; which struggle, meanwhile, either as half-truth or working itself into a whole truth, may be seen, in countries that have any Art, still forming the tendency of all artistic endeavour. In which sense, Diderot's *Essay on Painting* has been judged worth translation by the greatest modern Judge of Art, and greatest modern Artist, in the highest kind of Art; and may be read anew, with argumentative commentary and exposition, in *Goethe's Works*.

Nay, let us grant, with pleasure, that for Diderot himself the realms of Art were not wholly unvisited; that he too, so heavily imprisoned, stole Promethean fire. Among these multitudinous, most miscellaneous Writings of his, in great part a manufactured farrago of Philosophism no longer saleable, and now looking melancholy enough,—are two that we can almost call Poems; that have something perennially poetic in them: *Jacques le Fataliste*; in a still higher degree, the *Neveu de Rameau*. The occasional blueness of both; even that darkest indigo in some parts of the former, shall not altogether affright us. As it were, a loose straggling sun-beam flies here over Man's Existence in France, now nigh a century behind us: 'from the height of luxurious elegance to the depths of shamelessness,' all is here. Slack, careless seems the combination of the picture; wriggling, disjointed, like a bundle of flails; yet strangely united in the painter's inward unconscious feeling. Wearisomely crackling wit gets silent; a grim, taciturn, dare-devil, almost Hogarthian humour rises in the back-ground. Like this there is nothing that we know of in the whole range of French literature: La Fontaine is shallow in comparison; the La Bruyère wit-species not to be named. It resembles *Don Quixote* rather; of somewhat similar stature; yet of complexion altogether different; through the one looks a sunny Elysium,

through the other a sulphurous Erebus: both hold of the Infinite. This *Jacques*, perhaps, was not quite so hastily put together: yet there too haste is manifest: the Author finishes it off, not by working-out the figures and movements, but by dashing his brush against the canvas; a man-œuvre which in this case has not succeeded. The *Rameau's Nephew*, which is the shorter, is also the better; may pass for decidedly the best of all Diderot's compositions. It looks like a Sibylline utterance from a heart all in fusion: no ephemeral thing (for it was written as a Satire on Palissot) was ever more perennially treated. Strangely enough too, it lay some fifty years in German and Russian Libraries; came out first in the masterly version of Goethe, in 1805: and only (after a deceptive *re*-translation by a M. Saur, a courageous mystifier otherwise) reached the Paris public in 1821,—when perhaps *all* for whom and against whom it was written were no more!—It is a farce-tragedy; and its fate has corresponded to its purport. One day it must also be translated into English; but will require to be done by *head*; the common steam-machinery will not properly suffice for it.

We here (*con la bocca dolce*) take leave of Diderot in his intellectual aspect, as Artist and Thinker: a richly endowed, unfavourably situated nature; whose effort, much marred, yet not without fidelity of aim, can triumph, on rare occasions; and is perhaps nowhere utterly fruitless. In the moral aspect, as Man, he makes a somewhat similar figure; as indeed, in all men, in him especially, the Opinion and the Practice stand closely united; and as a wise man has remarked, 'the speculative principles are often but a supplement (or excuse) to the practical manner of life.' In conduct, Diderot can nowise seem admirable to us; yet neither

inexcusable; on the whole, not at all quite worthless. Lavater traced in his physiognomy ‘something timorous;’ which reading his friends admitted to be a correct one. Diderot, in truth, is no hero: the earnest soul, wayfaring and warfaring in the complexities of a World like to overwhelm him, yet wherein he by Heaven’s grace will keep faithfully warfaring, prevailing or not, can derive small solacement from this light, fluctuating, not to say flimsy existence of Diderot: no Gospel in that kind has he left us. The man, in fact, with all his high gifts, had rather a female character. Susceptible, sensitive, living by impulses, which at best he had *fashioned* into some show of principles; with vehemence enough, with even a female uncontrollableness; with little of manful steadfastness, considerateness, invincibility. Thus, too, we find him living mostly in the society of women, or of men who, like women, flattered him, and made life easy for him; recoiling with horror from an earnest Jean Jacques, who understood not the science of walking in a vain show; but imagined, poor man, that truth was there as a thing to be told, as a thing to be acted.

We call Diderot, then, not a coward; yet not in any sense a brave man. Neither towards himself, nor towards others, was he brave. All the virtues, says M. de Meister, which require not ‘a great *suite* (sequency) of ideas’ were his; all that do require such a *suite* were not his. In other words, what duties were easy for him he did: happily Nature had rendered several easy. His spiritual aim, moreover, seemed not so much to be enforcement, exposition of Duty, as discovery of a Duty-made-easy. Natural enough that he should strike into that province of *sentiment*, *cœur noble* and so forth. Alas, to declare that the beauty of virtue is beautiful, costs comparatively little: to win it, and wear it, is quite another enterprise,—wherein the loud braggart,

we know, is not the likeliest to succeed. On the whole, peace be with *sentiment*, for that also lies behind us!—For the rest, as hinted, what duties were difficult our Diderot left undone. How should he, the *cœur sensible*, front such a monster as Pain? And now, since misgivings cannot fail in that course, what is to be done but fill-up all asperities with floods of *sensibilité*, and so voyage more or less smoothly along? *Est-il bon? Est-il méchant?* is his own account of himself. At all events, he was no voluntary hypocrite; that great praise can be given him. And thus with Mechanical Philosophism, and *passion vive*; working, flirting; ‘with more of softness than of true affection, sometimes ‘with the malice and rage of a child, but on the whole an ‘inexhaustible fund of goodnatured simplicity,’ has he come down to us, for better or worse: and what can we do but receive him?—

If now we and our reader, reinterpreting for our present want that Life and Performance of Diderot, have brought it clearer before us, be the hour spent thereon, were it even more wearisome, no profitless one! Have we not striven to unite our own brief present moment more and more compactly with the Past and with the Future; have we not done what lay at our hand towards reducing that same Memoirism of the Eighteenth Century into History, and ‘weaving’ a thread or two thereof nearer to the condition of a web?

But finally, if we rise with this matter, as we should try to do with all matters, into the proper region of Universal History, and look on it with the eye not of this time or of that time, but of Time at large, perhaps the prediction might stand here, That intrinsically, essentially little lies in it; that one day when the net-result of our European way of life comes to be summed-up, this whole as yet so

boundless concern of French Philosophism will dwindle into the thinnest of fractions, or vanish into nonentity! Alas, while the rude History and Thoughts of those same '*Juifs misérables*,' the barbaric Warsong of a Deborah and Barak, the rapt prophetic Utterance of an unkempt Isaiah, last now, with deepest significance, say only these three thousand years,—what has the thrice-resplendent *Encyclopédie* shrivelled into within these threescore! This is a fact which, explain it, express it, in what way he will, your Encyclopedist should actually consider. *Those* were tones caught from the sacred Melody of the All, and have harmony and meaning forever; *these* of his are but outer discords, and their jangling dies away without result. 'The special, sole 'and deepest theme of the World's and Man's History,' says the Thinker of our time, 'whereto all other themes are sub-ordinated, remains the Conflict of UNBELIEF and BELIEF. 'All epochs wherein Belief prevails, under what form it 'may, are splendid, heart-elevating, fruitful for contemporaries and posterity. All epochs, on the contrary, wherein 'Unbelief, under what form soever, maintains its sorry 'victory, should they even for a moment glitter with a 'sham splendour, vanish from the eyes of posterity; because no one chooses to burden himself with study of the 'unfruitful.'

COUNT CAGLIOSTRO.

COUNT CAGLIOSTRO.

IN TWO FLIGHTS.¹

[1833.]

FLIGHT FIRST.

‘THE life of every man,’ says our friend Herr Sauerteig, ‘the life even of the meanest man, it were good to remember, is a Poem; perfect in all manner of Aristotelean requisites; with beginning, middle and end; with perplexities, and solutions; with its Will-strength (*Willenkraft*) and warfare against Fate, its elegy and battle-singing, courage marred by crime, everywhere the two tragic elements of Pity and Fear; above all, with supernatural machinery enough,—for was not the man *born* out of NONENTITY; did he not *die*, and miraculously vanishing return thither? The most indubitable Poem! Nay, whoso will, may he not name it a Prophecy, or whatever else is highest in his vocabulary; since only in Reality lies the essence and foundation of all that was ever fabled, visioned, sung, spoken, or babbled by the human species; and the actual Life of Man includes in it all Revelations, true and false, that have been, are, or are to be. Man! I say therefore, *reverence thy fellow-man*. He too issued from Above; is

¹ FRASER’S MAGAZINE, Nos. 43, 44 (July and August).

‘ mystical and supernatural (as thou namest it): this know
 ‘ thou of a truth. Seeing also that we ourselves are of so
 ‘ high Authorship, is not that, in very deed, “the highest
 ‘ Reverence,” and most needful for us: “Reverence for one-
 ‘ self”?

‘ Thus, to my view, is every Life, more properly is every
 ‘ Man that has life to lead, a small strophe, or occasional
 ‘ verse, composed by the Supernal Powers; and published,
 ‘ in such type and shape, with such embellishments, em-
 ‘ blematic head-piece and tail-piece as thou seest, to the
 ‘ thinking or unthinking Universe. Heroic strophes some
 ‘ few are; full of force and a sacred fire, so that to latest
 ‘ ages the hearts of those that read therein are made to
 ‘ tingle. Jeremiads others seem; mere weeping laments,
 ‘ harmonious or disharmonious Remonstrances against Des-
 ‘ tiny; whereat we too may sometimes profitably weep.
 ‘ Again, have we not flesh-and-blood strophes of the idyllic
 ‘ sort,—though in these days rarely, owing to Poor-Laws,
 ‘ Game-Laws, Population-Theories and the like! Farther,
 ‘ of the comic laughter-loving sort; yet ever with an un-
 ‘ fathomable earnestness, as is fit, lying underneath: for,
 ‘ bethink thee, what is the mirthfulest grinning face of any
 ‘ Grimaldi, but a transitory *mask*, behind which quite other-
 ‘ wise grins—the most indubitable *Death’s-head*! However,
 ‘ I say farther, there are strophes of the pastoral sort (as
 ‘ in Ettrick, Afghaunistan, and elsewhere); of the farcic-
 ‘ tragic, melodramatic, of all named and a thousand un-
 ‘ namable sorts there are poetic strophes, written, as was
 ‘ said, in Heaven, printed on Earth, and published (bound
 ‘ in woollen cloth, or *clothes*) for the use of the studious.
 ‘ Finally, a small number seem utter Pasquils, mere ribald
 ‘ libels on Humanity: these too, however, are at times worth
 ‘ reading.

‘In this wise,’ continues our too obscure friend, ‘out of all imaginable elements, awakening all imaginable moods of heart and soul, “barbarous enough to excite, tender enough to assuage,” ever contradictory yet ever coalescing, is that mighty world-old Rhapsodia of Existence page after page (generation after generation), and chapter (or epoch) after chapter, poetically put together! This is what some one names “the grand sacred Epos, or Bible of World-History; infinite in meaning as the Divine Mind it emblems; wherein he is wise that can read here a line, and there a line.”

‘Remark too, under another aspect, whether it is not in this same Bible of World-History that all men, in all times, with or without clear consciousness, have been unwearied to read, what we may call *read*; and again to write, or rather to be *written*! What is all History, and all Poesy, but a deciphering somewhat thereof, out of that mystic heaven-written Sanscrit; and rendering it into the speech of men? *Know thyself*, value thyself, is a moralist’s commandment (which I only half approve of); but *Know others*, value others, is the hest of Nature herself. Or again, *Work while it is called Today*: is not that also the irreversible law of being for mortal man? And now, what is all working, what is all knowing, but a faint interpreting and a faint showing-forth of that same *Mystery of Life*, which ever remains infinite,—heaven-written mystic Sanscrit? View it as we will, to him that lives, Life is a divine matter; felt to be of quite sacred significance. Consider the wretchedest “straddling biped that wears breeches” of thy acquaintance; into whose wool-head, Thought, as thou rashly supposest, never entered; who, in froth-element of business, pleasure, or what else he names it, walks forever in a vain show; asking not Whence, or Why, or Whither;

‘ looking up to the Heaven above as if some upholsterer had
‘ made it, and down to the Hell beneath as if *he* had neither
‘ part nor lot there: yet tell me, does not he too, over and
‘ above his five finite senses, acknowledge some sixth *infinite*
‘ sense, were it only that of Vanity? For, sate him in the
‘ other five as you may, will this sixth sense leave him rest?
‘ Does he not rise early and sit late, and study impromptus,
‘ and (in constitutional countries) parliamentary motions, and
‘ bursts of eloquence, and gird himself in whalebone, and pad
‘ himself and perk himself, and in all ways painfully take
‘ heed to his goings; feeling (if we must admit it) that an
‘ altogether infinite endowment has been intrusted him also,
‘ namely, a Life to lead? Thus does he too, with his whole
‘ force, in his own way, proclaim that the world-old Rhapsodia of Existence is divine, and an inspired Bible; and,
‘ himself a wondrous *verse* therein (be it heroic, be it pascallic), study with his whole soul, as we said, both to
‘ read and to *be written!*

‘ Here also I will observe, that the *manner* in which men
‘ read this same Bible is, like all else, proportionate to their
‘ stage of culture, to the circumstances of their environment.
‘ First, and among the earnest Oriental nations, it was read
‘ wholly like a Sacred Book; most clearly by the most
‘ earnest, those wondrous Hebrew Readers; whose reading
‘ accordingly was itself sacred, has meaning for all tribes
‘ of mortal men; since ever, to the latest generation of the
‘ world, a true utterance from the innermost of man’s being
‘ will speak significantly to man. But, again, in how different a style was that other Oriental reading of the Magi;
‘ of Zerdusht, or whoever it was that first so opened the
‘ matter? Gorgeous semi-sensual Grandeurs and Splendours:
‘ on infinite darkness, brightest-glowing light and fire;—of
‘ which, all defaced by Time, and turned mostly into lies,

‘ a quite late reflex, in those Arabian Tales and the like, still leads captive every heart. Look, thirdly, at the earnest West, and that Consecration of the Flesh, which stepped forth life-lusty, radiant, smiling-earnest, in immortal grace, from under the chisel and the stylus of old Greece. Here too was the Infinite intelligibly proclaimed as infinite: and the antique man walked between a Tartarus and an Elysium, his brilliant Paphos-islet of Existence embraced by boundless oceans of sadness and fateful gloom.—Of which three antique manners of reading, our modern manner, you will remark, has been little more than imitation: for always, indeed, the West has been rife of doers than of speakers. The Hebrew manner has had its echo in our Pulpits and choral aisles; the Ethnic Greek and Arabian in numberless mountains of Fiction, rhymed, rhymeless, published by subscription, by puffery, in periodicals, or by money of your own (*durch eignes Geld*). Till now at last, by dint of iteration and reiteration through some ten centuries, all these manners have grown obsolete, wearisome, meaningless; listened to only as the monotonous moaning wind, while there is nothing else to listen to:—and so now, well-nigh in total oblivion of the Infinitude of Life (except what small *unconscious* recognition the “straddling biped” above argued of may have), we wait, in hope and patience, for some *fourth* manner of anew convincingly announcing it.’

These singular sentences from the *Æsthetische Springwurzeln* we have thought right to translate and quote, by way of proem and apology. We are here about to give some critical account of what Herr Sauerteig would call a ‘flesh-and-blood Poem of the purest Pasquil sort;’ in plain words, to examine the biography of the most perfect scoundrel that in these latter ages has marked the world’s history. Pasquils too, says Sauerteig, ‘are at times worth reading.’

Or quitting that mystic dialect of his, may we not assert in our own way, that the history of an Original Man is always worth knowing? So magnificent a thing is Will incarnated in a creature of like fashion with ourselves, we run to witness *all* manifestations thereof: what man soever has marked out a peculiar path of life for himself, let it lead this way or that way, and successfully travelled the same, of him we specially inquire, How he travelled; What befell him on the journey? Though the man were a knave of the first water, this hinders not the question, How he managed his knavery? Nay it rather encourages such question; for nothing properly is wholly despicable, at once detestable and forgettable, but your half-knave, he who is neither true nor false; who never in his existence once spoke or did any true thing (for indeed his mind lives in twilight, with cat-vision, incapable of *discerning* truth); and yet had not the manfulness to speak or act any decided lie; but spent his whole life in plastering together the True and the False, and therefrom manufacturing the Plausible. Such a one our Transcendentals have defined as a Moral Hybrid and chimera; therefore, under the moral point of view, as an Impossibility, and mere deceptive Nonentity,—put together for commercial purposes. Of which sort, nevertheless, how many millions, through all manner of gradations, from the wielder of kings' sceptres to the vender of brimstone matches, at tea-tables, council-tables, behind shop-counters, in priests' pulpits, incessantly and everywhere, do now, in this world of ours, in this Isle of ours, offer themselves to view!

From such, at least from this intolerable over-proportion of such, might the merciful Heavens one day deliver us! Glorious, heroic, fruitful for his own Time, and for all Time and all Eternity, is the constant Speaker and Doer of Truth! If no such again, in the present generation, is to be vouch-

safed us, let us have at least the melancholy pleasure of beholding a decided Liar. Wretched mortal, who with a single eye to be 'respectable' forever sittest cobbling together two Inconsistencies, which stick not for an hour, but require ever new gluten and labour,—will it, by no length of experience, no bounty of Time or Chance, be revealed to thee that Truth is of Heaven, and Falsehood is of Hell; that if thou cast not from thee the one or the other, thy existence is wholly an Illusion and optical and tactual Phantasm; that properly thou existest not at all? Respectable! What, in the Devil's name, is the use of Respectability, with never so many gigs and silver spoons, if thou inwardly art the pitifulest of all men? I would thou wert either cold or hot.

One such desirable second-best, perhaps the chief of all such, we have here found in the Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, Pupil of the Sage Althotas, Foster-child of the Scherif of Mecca, probable Son of the last King of Trebisonde; named also Acharat, and Unfortunate Child of Nature; by profession healer of diseases, abolisher of wrinkles, friend of the poor and impotent, grand-master of the Egyptian Mason-lodge of High Science, Spirit-summoner, Gold-cook, Grand Cophta, Prophet, Priest, and thaumaturgic moralist and swindler; really a Liar of the first magnitude, thorough-paced in all provinces of lying, what one may call the King of Liars. Mendez Pinto, Baron Münchhausen and others are celebrated in this art, and not without some colour of justice; yet must it in candour remain doubtful whether any of these comparatively were much more than liars from the teeth onwards: a perfect character of the species in question, who lied not in word only, nor in act and word only, but continually, in thought, word and act; and, so to speak, lived wholly in an element of lying, and from birth to death

did nothing but lie,—was still a desideratum. Of which desideratum Count Alessandro offers, we say, if not the fulfilment, perhaps as near an approach to it as the limited human faculties permit. Not in the modern ages, probably not in the ancient (though these had their Autolycus, their Apollonius, and enough else), did any completer figure of this sort issue out of Chaos and Old Night: a sublime kind of figure, presenting himself with ‘the air of calm strength,’ of sure perfection in his art; whom the heart opens itself to, with wonder and a sort of welcome. ‘The only vice I know,’ says one, ‘is Inconsistency.’ At lowest, answer we, he that *does* his work shall have his work judged of. Indeed, if Satan himself has in these days become a poetic hero, why should not Cagliostro, for some short hour, be a prose one? ‘One first question,’ says a great Philosopher, ‘I ask of every man: Has he an aim, which with undivided soul he follows, and advances towards? Whether his aim is a right one or a wrong one, forms but my second question.’ Here, then, is a small ‘human Pasquil,’ not without poetic interest.

However, be this as it may, we apprehend the eye of science at least cannot view him with indifference. Doubtful, false as much is in Cagliostro’s manner of being, of this there is no doubt, that starting from the lowest point of Fortune’s wheel, he rose to a height universally notable; that, without external furtherance, money, beauty, bravery, almost without common sense, or any discernible worth whatever, he sumptuously supported, for a long course of years, the wants and digestion of one of the greediest bodies, and one of the greediest minds; outwardly in his five senses, inwardly in his ‘sixth sense, that of vanity,’ nothing straitened. Clear enough it is, however much may be supposititious, that this japanned Chariot, rushing through the

world, with dust-clouds and loud noise, at the speed of four swift horses, and topheavy with luggage, has an existence. The six Beef-eaters too, that ride prosperously heralding his advent, honourably escorting, menially waiting on him, are they not realities? Ever must the purse open, paying turnpikes, tavern-bills, drink-moneys, and the thousandfold tear and wear of such a team; yet ever, like a horn-of-plenty, does it pour; and after brief rest, the chariot ceases not to roll. Whereupon rather pressingly arises the scientific question: How? Within that wonderful machinery, of horses, wheels, top-luggage, beef-eaters, sits only a gross, thickset Individual, evincing dulness enough; and by his side a Seraphina, with a look of doubtful reputation: how comes it that means still meet ends, that the whole Engine, like a steam-coach wanting fuel, does not stagnate, go silent, and fall to pieces in the ditch? Such question did the scientific curiosity of the present writer often put; and for many a day in vain.

Neither, indeed, as Book-readers know, was he peculiar herein. The great Schiller, for example, struck both with the poetic and the scientific phases of the matter, admitted the influences of the former to shape themselves anew within him; and strove with his usual impetuosity to burst (since unlocking was impossible) the secrets of the latter: and so his unfinished Novel, the *Geisterseher*, saw the light. Still more renowned is Goethe's Drama of the *Gross-Kophta*; which, as himself informs us, delivered him from a state of mind that had become alarming to certain friends; so deep was the hold this business, at one of its epochs, had taken of him. A dramatic Fiction, that of his, based on the strictest possible historical study and inquiry; wherein perhaps the faithfulest image of the historical Fact, as yet extant in any shape, lies in artistic miniature curiously unfolded. Nay

mere Newspaper-readers, of a certain age, can bethink them of our London Egyptian Lodges of High Science; of the Countess Seraphina's dazzling jewelries, nocturnal brilliancies, sibyllic ministrations and revelations; of Miss Fry and Milord Scott, and Messrs. Priddle and the other shark *bailiffs*; and Lord Mansfield's judgment-seat; the Comte d'Adhémar, the Diamond Necklace, and Lord George Gordon. For Cagliostro, hovering through unknown space, twice (perhaps thrice) lighted on our London, and did business in the great chaos there.

Unparalleled Cagliostro! Looking at thy so attractively decorated private theatre, wherein thou actedst and livedst, what hand but itches to draw aside thy curtain; overhaul thy paste-boards, paintpots, paper-mantles, stage-lamps, and turning the whole inside out, find *thee* in the middle thereof! For there of a truth wert thou: though the rest was all foam and sham, there sattest *thou*, as large as life, and as esurient; warring against the world, and indeed conquering the world, for it remained thy tributary, and yielded daily rations. Innumerable Sheriff's-officers, Exempts, Sbirri, Alguazils, of every European climate, were prowling on thy traces, their intents hostile enough; thyself wert single against them all; in the whole earth thou hadst no friend. What say we, in the whole earth? In the whole universe thou hadst no friend! Heaven knew nothing of thee; *could* in charity know nothing of thee; and as for Beelzebub, *his* friendship, it is ascertained, cannot count for much.

But to proceed with business. The present inquirer, in obstinate investigation of a phenomenon so noteworthy, has searched through the whole not inconsiderable circle which his tether (of circumstances, geographical position, trade, health, extent of money-capital) enables him to describe: and, sad to say, with the most imperfect results. He has

read Books in various languages and jargons ; feared not to soil his fingers, hunting through ancient dusty Magazines, to sicken his heart in any labyrinth of iniquity and imbecility ; nay he had not grudged to dive even into the infectious *Mémoires de Casanova*, for a hint or two,—could he have found that work, which, however, most British Librarians make a point of denying that they possess. A painful search, as through some spiritual pest-house ; and then with such issue ! The quantity of discoverable Printing about Cagliostro (so much being burnt) is now not great ; nevertheless in frightful proportion to the quantity of information given. Except vague Newspaper rumours and surmises, the things found written of this Quack are little more than temporary Manifestos, by himself, by gulled or gulling disciples of his : not true therefore ; at best only certain fractions of what he wished or expected the blinder Public to reckon true ; misty, embroiled, for most part highly stupid ; perplexing, even provoking ; which can only be believed—to be, under such and such conditions, Lies. Of this sort emphatically is the English ‘*Life of the Count Cagliostro*, price three shillings and sixpence :’ a Book indeed which one might hold (so fatuous, inane is it) to be some mere dream-vision and unreal eidolon, did it not now stand palpably there, as ‘Sold by T. Hookham, Bond Street, 1787 ;’ and bear to be handled, spurned at and torn into pipe-matches. Some human creature doubtless was at the writing of it ; but of what kind, country, trade, character or gender, you will in vain strive to fancy. Of like fabulous stamp are the *Mémoires pour le Comte de Cagliostro*, emitted, with *Requête à joindre*, from the Bastille, during that sorrowful business of the Diamond Necklace, in 1786 ; no less the *Lettre du Comte de Cagliostro au Peuple Anglais*, which followed shortly after, at London ; from which two indeed, that fatuous inexplicable English

Life has perhaps been mainly manufactured. Next come the *Mémoires authentiques pour servir à l'Histoire du Comte de Cagliostro*, twice printed in the same year 1786, at Strasburg and at Paris; a swaggering, lascivious Novelette, without talent, without truth or worth, happily of small size. So fares it with us: alas, all this is but the *outside* decorations of the private-theatre, or the sounding of catcalls and applauses from the stupid audience; nowise the interior bare walls and dress-room which we wanted to see! Almost our sole even half-genuine documents are a small barren Pamphlet, *Cagliostro démasqué à Varsovie, en 1780*; and a small barren Volume purporting to be his *Life*, written at Rome, of which latter we have a French version, dated 1791. It is on this *Vie de Joseph Balsamo, connu sous le Nom de Comte Cagliostro*, that our main dependence must be placed; of which Work, meanwhile, whether it is wholly or only half-genuine, the reader may judge by one fact: that it comes to us through the medium of the Roman Inquisition, and the proofs to substantiate it lie in the Holy Office there. Alas, this reporting Familiar of the Inquisition was too probably something of a Liar; and he reports lying Confessions of one who was not so much a Liar as a Lie! In such enigmatic duskiness, and thrice-folded involution, after all inquiries, does the matter yet hang.

Nevertheless, by dint of meditation and comparison, light-points that stand fixed, and abide scrutiny, do here and there disclose themselves; diffusing a fainter light over what otherwise were dark, so that it is no longer invisible, but only dim. Nay after all, is there not in this same uncertainty a kind of fitness, of poetic congruity? Much that would offend the eye stands discreetly lapped in shade. Here too Destiny has cared for her favourite: that a powder-nimbus of astonishment, mystification and uncertainty

should still encircle the Quack of Quacks, is right and suitable; such was by Nature and Art his chosen uniform and environment. Thus, as formerly in Life, so now in History, it is in huge fluctuating smoke-whirlwinds, partially illumed into a most brazen glory, yet united, coalescing with the region of everlasting Darkness, in miraculous clear-obscure, that he works and rides.

‘Stern Accuracy in inquiring, bold Imagination in expounding and filling-up; these,’ says friend Sauerteig, ‘are the two pinions on which History soars,’—or flutters and wabbles. To which two pinions let us and the readers of this Magazine now daringly commit ourselves. Or chiefly indeed to the *latter* pinion, of Imagination; which, if it be the *larger*, will indeed make an unequal flight! Meanwhile, the style at least shall if possible be equal to the subject.

Know, then, that in the year 1743, in the city of Palermo, in Sicily, the family of Signor Pietro Balsamo, a shopkeeper, were exhilarated by the birth of a Boy. Such occurrences have now become so frequent, that, miraculous as they are, they occasion little astonishment: old Balsamo for a space, indeed, laid down his ellwands and unjust balances; but for the rest, met the event with equanimity. Of the possetings, junketings, gossipings, and other ceremonial rejoicings, transacted according to the custom of the country, for welcome to a New-comer, not the faintest tradition has survived; enough, that the small New-comer, hitherto a mere ethnic or heathen, is in a few days made a Christian of, or as we vulgarly say, christened; by the name Giuseppe. A fat, red, globular kind of fellow, not under nine pounds avoirdupois, the bold Imagination can figure him to be: if not proofs, there are indications that sufficiently betoken as much.

Of his teething and swaddling adventures, of his scald-

ings, squallings, pukings, purgings, the strictest search into History can discover nothing; not so much as the epoch when he passed out of long-clothes stands noted in the fasti of Sicily. That same 'larger pinion' of Imagination, nevertheless, conducts him from his native blind-alley, into the adjacent street *Casaro*; descries him, with certain contemporaries now unknown, essaying himself in small games of skill; watching what phenomena, of carriage-transits, dog-battles, street-music, or suchlike, the neighbourhood might offer (intent above all on any windfall of chance *provender*); now, with incipient scientific spirit, puddling in the gutters; now, as small poet (or maker), baking mud-pies. Thus does he tentatively coast along the outskirts of Existence, till once he shall be strong enough to land and make a footing there.

Neither does it seem doubtful that with the earliest exercise of speech, the gifts of simulation and dissimulation began to manifest themselves; Giuseppe, or Beppo as he was now called, could indeed speak the truth,—but only when he saw his advantage in it. Hungry also, as above hinted, he too-probably often was: a keen faculty of digestion, a meagre larder within doors; these two circumstances, so frequently conjoined in this world, reduced him to his inventions. As to the thing called Morals, and knowledge of Right and Wrong, it seems pretty certain that such knowledge, the sad fruit of Man's Fall, had in great part been spared him; if he ever heard the commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*, he most probably could not believe in it, therefore could not obey it. For the rest, though of quick temper, and a ready striker where clear prospect of victory showed itself, we fancy him vociferous rather than bellicose, not prone to violence where stratagem will serve; almost pacific, indeed, had not his many wants necessitated him to many

conquests. Above all things, a brazen impudence develops itself; the crowning gift of one born to scoundrelism. In a word, the fat thickset Beppo, as he skulks about there, plundering, playing dog's-tricks, with his finger in every mischief, already gains character; shrill housewives of the neighbourhood, whose sausages he has filched, whose weaker sons maltreated, name him Beppo Maldetto, and indignantly prophesy that he will be hanged. A prediction which, as will be seen, the issue has signally falsified.

We hinted that the household larder was in a leanish state; in fact, the outlook of the Balsamo family was getting troubled; old Balsamo had, during these things, been called away on his long journey. Poor man! The future eminence and preëminence of his Beppo he foresaw not, or what a world's-wonder he had thoughtlessly generated; as indeed, which of us, by much calculating, can sum-up the net-total (Utility, or Inutility) of any his most indifferent act, —a seed cast into the seedfield of TIME, to grow there, producing fruits or poisons, forever! Meanwhile Beppo himself gazed heavily into the matter; hung his thick lips while he saw his mother weeping; and, for the rest, eating what fat or sweet thing he could come at, let Destiny take its course.

The poor widow, ill-named *Felicità*, spinning out a painful livelihood by such means as only the poor and forsaken know, could not but many times cast an impatient eye on her brass-faced, voracious Beppo; and ask him, If he never meant to turn himself to anything? A maternal uncle, of the moneyed sort (for he has uncles not without influence), has already placed him in the Seminary of Saint Roch, to gain some tincture of schooling there: but Beppo feels himself misplaced in that sphere; 'more than once runs away;' is flogged, snubbed, tyrannically checked on all sides; and finally, with such slender stock of schooling as had pleased

to offer itself, returns to the street. The widow, as we said, urges him, the uncles urge: Beppo, wilt thou never turn thyself to anything? Beppo, with such speculative faculty, from such low watchtower as he commands, is in truth, being forced to it, from time to time, looking abroad into the world; surveying the conditions of mankind, therewith contrasting his own wishes and capabilities. Alas, his wishes are manifold; a most hot Hunger (in all kinds), as above hinted; but on the other hand, his leading capability seemed only the Power to Eat. What profession or condition, then? Choose; for it is time. Of all the terrestrial professions, that of Gentleman, it seemed to Beppo, had, under these circumstances, been most suited to his feelings: but then the outfit? the apprentice-fee? Failing which, he, with perhaps as much sagacity as one could expect, decides for the Ecclesiastical.

Behold him then, once more by the uncle's management, journeying, a chubby brass-faced boy of thirteen, beside the Reverend Father-General of the Benfratelli, to their neighbouring Convent of Cartegirone, with intent to enter himself novice there. He has donned the novice-habit; is 'intrusted to the keeping of the Convent-Apothecary,' on whose gallipots and crucibles he looks round with wonder. Were it by accident that he found himself Apothecary's Famulus, were it by choice of his own—nay was it not, in either case, by *design* of Destiny, intent on perfecting her work?—Enough, in this Cartegirone Laboratory there awaited him, though as yet he knew it not, life-guidance and determination; the great want of every genius, even of the scoundrel-genius. He himself confesses that he here learned some (or, as he calls it, *the*) 'principles of chemistry and medicine.' Natural enough: new books of the Chemists lay here, old books of the Alchemists; distillations, sublimations

visibly went on; discussions there were, oral and written, of gold-making, salve-making, treasure-digging, divining-rods, projection, and the alcahest: besides, had he not among his fingers calxes, acids, Leyden-jars? Some first elements of medico-chemical conjurorship, so far as phosphorescent mixtures, aqua-toffana, ipecacuanha, cantharides tincture, and suchlike would go, were now attainable; sufficient when the hour came, to set-up any average Quack, much more the Quack of Quacks. It is here, in this unpromising environment, that the seeds, therapeutic, thaumaturgic, of the Grand Cophta's stupendous workings and renown were sown.

Meanwhile, as observed, the environment looked unpromising enough. Beppo with his two endowments, of Hunger and of Power to Eat, had made the best choice he could; yet, as it soon proved, a rash and disappointing one. To his astonishment, he finds that even here he 'is in a conditional world;' and, if he will employ his capability of eating or enjoying, must first, in some measure, work and suffer. Contention enough hereupon: but now dimly arises or reproduces itself, the question, Whether there were not a *shorter* road, that of stealing? Stealing—under which, generically taken, you may include the whole art of scoundrelism; for what is Lying itself but a *theft* of my belief?—stealing, we say, is properly the North-West Passage to Enjoyment: while common Navigators sail painfully along torrid shores, laboriously doubling this or the other Cape of Hope, your adroit Thief-Parry, drawn on smooth dog-sledges, is already there and back again. The misfortune is, that stealing requires a talent; and failure in that North-West voyage is more fatal than in any other. We hear that Beppo was 'often punished:' painful experiences of the fate of genius; for all genius, by its nature, comes to disturb *somebody* in his ease, and your thief-genius more so than most!

Readers can now fancy the sensitive skin of Beppo mortified with prickly cilices, wealed by knotted thongs; his soul afflicted by vigils and forced fasts; no eye turned kindly on him; everywhere the bent of his genius rudely contravened. However, it is the first property of genius to grow in spite of contradiction, and even by means thereof;—as the vital germ pushes itself through the dull soil, and lives by what strove to bury it! Beppo, waxing into strength of bone and character, sets his face stiffly against persecution, and is not a whit disheartened. On *such* chastisements and chastisers he can look with a certain genial disdain. Beyond convent-walls, with their sour stupid shavelings, lies Palermo, lies the world; here too is he, still alive,—though worse off than he wished; and feels that the world is his oyster, which he (by chemical or other means) will one day open. Nay, we find there is a touch of grim Humour unfolds itself in the youth; the surest sign, as is often said, of a character naturally great. Witness, for example, how he acts on this to his ardent temperament so trying occasion. While the monks sit at meat, the impetuous voracious Beppo (that stupid Inquisition-Biographer records it as a thing of course) is set not to eat with them, not to pick up the crumbs that fall from them, but to stand ‘reading the Martyrology’ for their pastime! The brave adjusts himself to the inevitable. Beppo reads that dullest Martyrology of theirs; but reads out of it not what is printed there, but what his own vivid brain on the spur of the moment devises: instead of the names of Saints, all heartily indifferent to him, he reads out the names of the most notable Palermo ‘unfortunate-females,’ now beginning to interest him a little. What a ‘deep world-irony,’ as the Germans call it, lies here! The Monks, of course, felled him to the earth, and flayed him with scourges; but what did it avail?

This only became apparent, to himself and them, that he had now outgrown their monk-discipline; as the psyche does its chrysalis-shell, and bursts it. Giuseppe Balsamo bids farewell to Cartegirone forever and a day.

So now, by consent or not of the ghostly Benfratelli (Friars of *Mercy*, as they were named!), our Beppo has again returned to the maternal uncle at Palermo. The uncle naturally asked him, What he next meant to do? Beppo, after stammering and hesitating for some length of weeks, makes answer: Try Painting. Well and good! So Beppo gets him colours, brushes, fit tackle, and addicts himself for some space of time to the study of what is innocently called *Design*. Alas, if we consider Beppo's great Hunger, now that new senses were unfolding in him, how inadequate are the exiguous resources of Design; how necessary to attempt quite another deeper species of Design, of Designs! It is true, he lives with his uncle, has culinary meat; but where is the pocket-money for other costlier sorts of meats to come from? As the Kaiser Joseph was wont to say: From my head alone (*De ma tête seule*)!

The Roman Biographer, though a most wooden man, has incidentally thrown some light on Beppo's position at this juncture: both on his wants and his resources. As to the first, it appears (using the wooden man's phraseology) that he kept the 'worst company,' led the 'loosest life,' was hand-in-glove with all the swindlers, gamblers, idle apprentices, unfortunate-females, of Palermo: in the study and practice of Scoundrelism diligent beyond most. The genius which has burst asunder convent-walls, and other rubbish of impediments, now flames upward towards its mature splendour. Wheresoever a stroke of mischief is to be done, a slush of so-called vicious enjoyment to be swallowed, there with hand and throat is Beppo Balsamo seen. He will be a

Master, one day, in his profession. Not indeed that he has yet quitted Painting, or even purposes so much: for the present, it is useful, indispensable, as a stalking-horse to the maternal uncle and neighbours; nay to himself,—for with all the ebullient impulses of scoundrel-genius restlessly seething in him, irrepressibly bursting through, he has the noble unconsciousness of genius; guesses not, dare not guess, that he is a born scoundrel, much less a born world-scoundrel.

But as for the other question, of his resources, these we perceive were several-fold, and continually extending. Not to mention any pictorial exiguities, which indeed existed chiefly in expectance,—there had almost accidentally arisen for him, in the first place, the resource of Pandering. He has a fair cousin living in the house with him, and she again has a lover; Beppo stations himself as go-between; delivers letters; fails not to drop hints that a lady, to be won or kept, must be generously treated; that such and such a pair of earrings, watch, necklace, or even sum of money, would work wonders; which valuables, adds the wooden Roman Biographer, ‘he then appropriated furtively.’ Like enough! Next, however, as another more lasting resource, he forges; at first in a small way, and trying his apprentice-hand: tickets for the theatre, and such trifles. Ere long, however, we see him fly at higher quarry; by practice he has acquired perfection in the great art of counterfeiting hands; and will exercise it on the large or on the narrow scale, for a consideration. Among his relatives is a Notary, with whom he can insinuate himself; for purpose of study, or even of practice. In the presses of this Notary lies a Will, which Beppo contrives to come at, and falsify ‘for the benefit of a certain Religious House.’ Much good may it do them! Many years afterwards the fraud was detected; but Beppo’s benefit in

it was spent and safe long before. Thus again the stolid Biographer expresses horror or wonder that he should have forged leave-of-absence for a monk, 'counterfeiting the signature of the Superior.' Why not? A forger must forge what is wanted of him: the Lion truly preys not on mice; yet shall he refuse such, if they jump into his mouth? Enough, the indefatigable Beppo has here opened a quite boundless mine; wherein through his whole life he will, as occasion calls, dig, at his convenience. Finally, he can predict fortunes and show visions,—by phosphorus and legerdemain. This, however, only as a dilettantism; to take-up the earnest profession of Magician does not yet enter into his views. Thus perfecting himself in all branches of his art, does our Balsamo live and grow. Stupid, pudding-faced as he looks and is, there is a vulpine astucity in him; and then a wholeness, a heartiness, a kind of blubbery impetuosity, an oiliness so plausible-looking: give him only length of life, he will rise to the top of his profession.

Consistent enough with such blubbery impetuosity in Beppo is another fact we find recorded of him, that at this time he was found 'in most brawls,' whether in street or tavern. The way of his business led him into liability to such; neither as yet had he learned prudence by age. Of choleric temper, with all his obesity; a square-built, burly, vociferous fellow; ever ready with his stroke (if victory seemed sure); nay, at bottom, not without a certain pig-like defensive-ferocity, perhaps even something more. Thus, when you find him making a point to attack, if possible, 'all officers of justice,' and deforce them; delivering the wretched from their talons: was not this, we say, a kind of dog-faithfulness, and public spirit, either of the mastiff or of the cur species? Perhaps too there was a touch of that old Humour and 'world-irony' in it. One still more unquestionable feat

he is recorded (we fear, on imperfect evidence) to have done: 'assassinated a canon.'

Remonstrances from growling maternal uncles could not fail; threats, disdains from ill-affected neighbours; tears from an expostulating widowed mother: these he shakes from him like dewdrops from the lion's mane. Still less could the Police neglect him; him the visibly rising Professor of Swindlery; the swashbuckler, to boot, and deforcer of bailiffs: he has often been captured, haled to their bar; yet hitherto, by defect of evidence, by good luck, intercession of friends, been dismissed with admonition. Two things, nevertheless, might now be growing clear: first, that the die was cast with Beppo, and he a scoundrel for life; second, that such a mixed, composite, crypto-scoundrel life could not endure, but must unfold itself into a pure, declared one. The Tree that is planted stands not still; *must* pass through all its stages and phases, from the state of acorn to that of green leafy oak, of withered leafless oak; to the state of felled timber, finally to that of firewood and ashes. Not less (though less visibly to dull eyes) the Act that is done, the condition that has realised itself; above all things, the Man, with his Fortunes, that has been born. Beppo, every-way in vigorous vitality, cannot continue half-painting half-swindling in Palermo; must develop himself into whole swindler; and, unless hanged there, seek his bread elsewhere. What the proximate cause, or signal, of such crisis and development might be, no man could say; yet most men would have confidently guessed, The Police. Nevertheless it proved otherwise; not by the flaming sword of Justice, but by the rusty dirk of a foolish private individual, is Beppo driven forth.

Walking one day in the fields (as the bold historic Imagination will figure) with a certain ninny of a 'Goldsmith

named Marano,' as they pass one of those rock-chasms frequent in the fair Island of Sicily, Beppo begins, in his oily, voluble way, to hint, That treasures often lay hid; that a Treasure lay hid *there*, as he knew by some pricking of his thumbs, divining-rod, or other talismanic monition: which Treasure might, by aid of science, courage, secrecy and a small judicious advance of money, be fortunately lifted. The gudgeon takes; advances, by degrees, to the length of 'sixty gold Ounces;'² sees magic circles drawn in the wane or in the full of the moon, blue (phosphorus) flames arise, split twigs auspiciously quiver; and at length—demands peremptorily that the Treasure be dug. A night is fixed on: the ninny Goldsmith, trembling with rapture and terror, breaks ground; digs, with thick breath and cold sweat, fiercely down, down, Beppo relieving him: the work advances; when, ah! at a certain stage of it (*before* fruition) hideous yells arise, a jingle like the emptying of Birmingham; six Devils pounce upon the poor sheep Goldsmith, and beat him almost to *mutton*; mercifully sparing Balsamo,—who indeed has himself summoned them thither, and as it were created them (with goatskins and burnt cork). Marano, though a ninny, now knew how it lay; and furthermore that he had a stiletto. One of the grand drawbacks of swindler-genius! You accomplish the Problem; and then—the Elementary Quantities, Algebraic Symbols you worked on, will fly in your face!

Hearing of stilettos, our Algebraist begins to look around him, and view his empire of Palermo in the concrete. An empire now much exhausted; much infested, too, with sorrows of all kinds, and every day the more; nigh ruinous, in short; not worth being stabbed for. There is a world elsewhere. In any case, the young Raven has now shed his

² The Sicilian Ounce (*Onza*) is worth about ten shillings sterling.

pens, and got fledged for flying. Shall he not spurn the whole from him, and soar off? Resolved, performed! Our Beppo quits Palermo; and, as it proved, on a long voyage: or, as the Inquisition-Biographer has it, 'he fled from Palermo, and overran the whole Earth.'

Here, then, ends the First Act of Count Alessandro Cagliostro's Life-drama. Let the curtain drop; and hang unrent, before an audience of mixed feeling, till the First of August.

FLIGHT LAST.

BEFORE entering on the second Section of Count Beppo's History, the Editor will indulge in a philosophical reflection.

This Beppic Hegira, or Flight from Palermo, we have now arrived at, brings us down, in European History, to somewhere about the epoch of the Peace of Paris. Old Feudal Europe, while Beppo flies forth into the whole Earth, has just finished the last of her 'tavern-brawls,' or wars; and lain down to doze, and yawn, and disconsolately wear-off the headaches, bruises, nervous prostration and flaccidity consequent thereon: for the brawl had been a long one, *Seven Years* long; and there had been many such, begotten, as is usual, of intoxication from Pride or other Devil's-drink, and foul humours in the constitution. Alas, it was not so much a disconsolate doze, after ebriety and quarrel, that poor old Feudal Europe had now to undergo, and then on awakening to drink anew, and quarrel anew: old Feudal Europe has fallen a-dozing to die! Her next awakening will be with no tavern-brawl, at the *King's Head* or *Prime Minister* tavern; but with the stern Avatar of DEMOCRACY, hymning its world-thrilling birth- and battle-song in the distant West;—therefrom to go out conquering and to conquer, till it have made the circuit of all the Earth, and old dead Feudal Europe is born again (after infinite pangs!) into a new Industrial one. At Beppo's Hegira, as we said, Europe was in the last languor and stertorous fever-sleep of Dissolution: alas, with us, and with our sons for a generation or two, it is almost still worse,—were it not that in

Birth-throes there is ever hope, in Death-throes the final departure of hope.

Now the philosophic reflection we were to indulge in, was no other than this, most germane to our subject: the portentous extent of Quackery, the multitudinous variety of Quacks that, along with our Beppo, and under him each in his degree, overran all Europe during that same period, the latter half of last century. It was the very age of impostors, cut-purses, swindlers, double-goers, enthusiasts, ambiguous persons; quacks simple, quacks compound; crack-brained, or with deceit prepense; quacks and quackeries of all colours and kinds. How many Mesmerists, Magicians, Cabalists, Swedenborgians, Illuminati, Crucified Nuns, and Devils of Loudun! To which the Inquisition-Biographer adds Vampires, Sylphs, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and an *Etcetera*. Consider your Schröpfers, Cagliostros, Casanovas, Saint-Germains, Dr. Grahams; the Chevalier d'Eon, Psalmanazar, Abbé Paris and the Ghost of Cock-lane! As if Bedlam had broken loose; as if, rather, in that 'spiritual Twelfth-hour of the night,' the everlasting Pit had opened itself, and from *its* still blacker bosom had issued Madness and all manner of shapeless Misbirths, to masquerade and chatter there.

But indeed, if we consider, how could it be otherwise? In that stertorous last fever-sleep of our European world, must not Phantasms enough, born of the Pit, as all such *are*, flit past, in ghastly masquerading and chattering? A low scarce-audible moan (in Parliamentary Petitions, Meal-mobs, Popish Riots, Treatises on Atheism) struggles from the moribund sleeper; frees him not from his hellish guests and saturnalia: Phantasms these 'of a dying brain.' So too, when the old Roman world, the measure of its iniquities being full, was to expire, and (in still bitterer agonies) be

born again, had they not Veneficæ, Mathematici, Apolloniuses with the Golden Thigh, Apollonius' Asses, and False Christs enough,—before a REDEEMER arose!

For, in truth, and altogether apart from such half-figurative language, Putrescence is not more naturally the scene of unclean creatures in the world physical, than Social Decay is of quacks in the world moral. Nay, look at it with the eye of the mere Logician, of the Political Economist. In such periods of Social Decay, what is called an overflowing Population, that is a Population which, under the old Captains of Industry (named Higher Classes, *Ricos Hombres*, Aristocracies and the like), can no longer find work and wages, increases the number of Unprofessionals, Lackalls, Social Nondescripts; with appetite of utmost keenness, which there is no known method of satisfying. Nay more, and perversely enough, ever as Population augments, your Captains of Industry can and do dwindle more and more into Captains of Idleness; whereby the more and more overflowing Population is worse and worse governed (shown *what to do*, for that is the only government): thus is the candle lighted at both ends; and the number of social Nondescripts increases in *double-quick* ratio. Whoso is alive, it is said, 'must live;' at all events, will live; a task which daily gets harder, reduces to stranger shifts.

And now furthermore, with general economic distress, in such a Period, there is usually conjoined the utmost decay of moral principle: indeed, so universal is this conjunction, many men have seen it to be a concatenation and causation; justly enough, except that such have very generally, ever since a certain religious-repentant feeling went out of date, committed one sore mistake: what is vulgarly called putting the cart before the horse. Politico-economical benefactor of the species! deceive not thyself with barren sophisms: National

suffering *is*, if thou wilt understand the words, verily a ‘judgment of God;’ has ever been preceded by national crime. ‘Be it here once more maintained before the world,’ cries Sauerteig, in one of his *Springwurzeln*, ‘that temporal Distress, that Misery of any kind, is not the *cause* of Immortality, but the effect thereof! Among individuals, it is true, ‘so wide is the empire of Chance, poverty and wealth go all at hap-hazard; a St. Paul is making tents at Corinth, while a Kaiser Nero fiddles, in ivory palaces, over a burning Rome. Nevertheless here too, if nowise wealth and poverty, yet well-being and ill-being; even in the temporal economic sense, go commonly in respective partnership with Wisdom and with Folly: no man can, for a length of time, be wholly wretched, if there is not a disharmony (a folly and wickedness) within himself; neither can the richest Croesus and never so eupeptic (for he too has his indigestions, and dies at last of surfeit), be other than discontented, perplexed, unhappy, if he be a Fool.’—This we apprehend is true, O Sauerteig, yet not the whole truth: for there is more than day’s-work and day’s-wages in this world of ours: which, as thou knowest, is itself quite other than a ‘Workshop and Fancy-Bazaar,’ is also a ‘Mystic Temple and Hall of Doom.’ Thus we have heard of such things as good men struggling with adversity, and offering a spectacle for the very gods.

‘But with a nation,’ continues he, ‘where the multitude of the chances covers, in great measure, the uncertainty of Chance, it may be said to hold always that general Suffering is the fruit of general Misbehaviour, general Dishonesty. Consider it well; had all men stood faithfully to their posts, the Evil, when it first rose, had been manfully fronted, and abolished, not lazily blinked, and left to grow, with the foul sluggard’s comfort: “It will last my time.” Thou foul slug-

‘gard, and even thief (*Faulenzer, ja Dieb*)! For art thou not a thief, to pocket thy day’s-wages (be they counted in *groschen* or in gold thousands) for this, if it be for anything, for watching on thy special watch-tower that God’s City (which this His World is, where His children dwell) suffer no damage; and, all the while, to watch only that thy own ease be not invaded,—let otherwise hard come to hard as it will and can? Unhappy! It will last thy time: thy worthless sham of an existence, wherein nothing but the Digestion was real, will have evaporated in the interim; it will last thy time: but will it last thy *Eternity*? Or what if it should *not* last thy time (mark that also, for that also will be the fate of *some* such lying sluggard), but take fire, and explode, and consume thee like the moth!’

The sum of the matter, in any case, is, that national Poverty and national Dishonesty go together; that continually increasing social Nondescripts get ever the hungrier, ever the falser. Now say, have we not here the very making of Quackery; raw-material, plastic-energy, both in full action? Dishonesty the raw-material, Hunger the plastic-energy: what will not the two realise? Nay observe farther how Dishonesty is the raw-material not of Quacks only, but also in great part of Dupes. In Goodness, were it never so simple, there is the surest instinct for the Good; the uneasiest unconquerable repulsion for the False and Bad. The very Devil Mephistopheles cannot deceive poor guileless Margaret: ‘it stands written on his brow that he never loved a living soul!’ The like too has many a human inferior Quack painfully experienced; the like lies in store for our hero Beppo. But now with such abundant raw-material not only to make Quacks of, but to feed and occupy them on, if the plastic-energy of Hunger fail not, what a world shall we have! The wonder is not that the eighteenth cen-

tury had very numerous Quacks, but rather that they were not innumerable.

In that same French Revolution alone, which burnt-up so much, what unmeasured masses of Quackism were set fire to; nay, as foul mephitic fire-damp in that case, were made to flame in a fierce, sublime *splendour*; coruscating, even illuminating! The Count Saint-Germain, some twenty years later, had found a quite new element, of Fraternisation, Sacred right of Insurrection, Oratorship of the Human Species, wherefrom to body himself forth quite otherwise: Schröpfer needed not now, as Blackguard undeterred, have solemnly shot himself in the *Rosenthal*; might have solemnly sacrificed himself, as Jacobin half-heroic, in the *Place de la Révolution*. For your quack-genius is indeed born, but also made; circumstances shape him or stunt him. Beppo Balsamo, born British in these new days, could have conjured fewer Spirits; yet had found a living and glory, as Castlereagh Spy, Irish Associationist, Blacking-Manufacturer, Book-Publisher, Able Editor. Withal too the reader will observe that Quacks, in every time, are of two sorts: the Declared Quack; and the Undeclared, who, if you question him, will deny stormfully, both to others and to himself; of which two quack-species the proportions vary with the varying capacity of the age. If Beppo's was the age of the Declared, therein, after all French Revolutions, we will grant, lay one of its main distinctions from ours; which is it not yet, and for a generation or two, the age of the Undeclared? Alas, almost a still more detestable age;—yet now (by God's grace), with Prophecy, with irreversible Enactment, registered in Heaven's chancery,—where *thou* too, if thou wilt *look*, mayst read and know, That its death-doom shall not linger. Be it speedy, be it sure!—And so herewith were our philosophical reflection, on the nature, causes,

prevalence, decline and expected temporary destruction of Quackery, concluded; and now the Beppic poetic Narrative can once more take its course.

Beppo, then, like a Noah's Raven, is out upon that watery waste of dissolute, beduped, distracted European Life, to see if there is any carrion there. One unguided little Raven, in the wide-weltering 'Mother of dead Dogs:' will he not come to harm; will he not be snapt-up, drowned, starved and washed to the Devil there? No fear of him,—for a time. His eye (or scientific judgment), it is true, as yet takes-in only a small section of it; but then his scent (instinct of genius) is prodigious: several endowments, forgery and others, he has unfolded into talents; the two sources of all quack-talent, Cunning and Impudence, are his in richest measure.

As to his immediate course of action and adventure, the foolish Inquisition-Biographer, it must be owned, shows himself a fool, and can give us next to no insight. Like enough, Beppo 'fled to Messina;' simply as to the nearest city, and to get across to the mainland: but as to this 'certain Althotas' whom he met there, and voyaged with to Alexandria in Egypt, and how they made hemp into silk, and realised much money, and came to Malta, and studied in the Laboratory there, and then the certain Althotas died,—of all this what shall be said? The foolish Inquisition-Biographer is uncertain whether the certain Althotas was a Greek or a Spaniard: but unhappily the prior question is not settled, whether he *was* at all. Superfluous it seems to put down Beppo's own account of his procedure; he gave multifarious accounts, as the exigencies of the case demanded: this of the 'certain Althotas,' and hemp made into false silk, is as verisimilar as that other of the 'sage Althotas,' the heirship-apparent of

Trebisond, and the Scherif of Mecca's "Adieu, unfortunate Child of Nature." Nay the guesses of the ignorant world; how Count Cagliostro had been travelling-tutor to a Prince (name not given), whom he murdered and took the money from; with others of the like,—were perhaps still more absurd. Beppo, we can see, was cut and away,—the Devil knew whither. Far, variegated, painful might his roamings be. A plausible-looking shadow of him shows itself hovering over Naples and Calabria; thither, as to a famed high-school of Laziness and Scoundrelism, he may likely enough have gone to graduate. Of the Malta Laboratory, and Alexandrian hemp-silk, the less we say the better. This only is clear: That Beppo dived deep down into the lugubrious-obscure regions of Rascaldom; like a Knight to the palace of his Fairy; remained unseen there, and returned thence armed at all points.

If we fancy, meanwhile, that Beppo already meditated becoming Grand Cophta, and riding at Strasburg in the Cardinal's carriage, we mistake much. Gift of Prophecy has been wisely denied to man. Did a man *foresee* his life, and not merely *hope* it, and grope it, and so, by Necessity and Freewill, make and fabricate it into a reality, he were no *man*, but some other kind of creature, superhuman or subter-human. No man sees far; the most see no farther than their noses. From the quite dim uncertain mass of the future, 'which lies there,' says a Scottish Humorist, 'uncombed, uncarded, like a mass of *tarry wool* proverbially *ill to spin*,' they spin out, better or worse, their rumply, infirm thread of Existence, and wind it up, up,—till the spool is *full*; seeing but some little half-yard of it at once; exclaiming, as they look into the betarred entangled mass of Futurity, We *shall* see!

The first authentic fact with regard to Beppo is, that

his swart squat figure becomes visible in the Corso and Campo Vaccino of Rome; that he 'lodges at the Sign of the Sun in the Rotonda,' and sells pen-drawings there. Properly they are not pen-drawings; but printed engravings or etchings, to which Beppo, with a pen and a little Indian ink, has added the degree of scratching to give them the air of such. Thereby mainly does he realise a thin livelihood. From which we infer that his transactions in Naples and Calabria, with Althotas and hemp-silk, or whatever else, had not turned to much.

Forged pen-drawings are no mine of wealth: neither was Beppo Balsamo anything of an Adonis; on the contrary, a most dusky, bull-necked, mastiff-faced, sinister-looking individual: nevertheless, on applying for the favour of the hand of Lorenza Feliciani, a beautiful Roman donzella, 'dwelling near the Trinity of the Pilgrims,' the unfortunate child of Nature prospers beyond our hopes. Authorities differ as to the rank and status of this fair Lorenza: one account says, she was the daughter of a Girdle-maker; but adds erroneously that it was in Calabria. The matter must remain suspended. Certain enough, she was a handsome buxom creature; 'both pretty and lady-like,' it is presumable; but having no offer, in a country too prone to celibacy, took-up with the bull-necked forger of pen-drawings, whose suit too was doubtless pressed with the most flowing rhetoric. She gave herself in marriage to him; and the parents admitted him to quarter in their house, till it should appear what was next to be done.

Two kitchen-fires, says the Proverb, burn not on one hearth: here, moreover, might be quite special causes of discord. Pen-drawing, at best a hungry concern, has now exhausted itself, and must be given up; but Beppo's household prospects brighten, on the other side: in the charms

of his Lorenza he sees before him what the French call 'a Future confused and immense.' The hint was given; and, with reluctance, or without reluctance (for the evidence leans *both* ways), was taken and reduced to practice: Signor and Signora Balsamo are forth from the old Girdler's house, into the wide world, seeking and finding adventures.

The foolish Inquisition-Biographer, with painful scientific accuracy, furnishes a descriptive catalogue of all the successive Cullies (Italian Counts, French Envoys, Spanish Marquises, Dukes and Drakes) in various quarters of the known world, whom this accomplished pair took-in; with the sums each yielded, and the methods employed to bewitch him. Into which descriptive catalogue, why should we here so much as cast a glance? Cullies, the easy cushions on which knaves and knavesses repose and fatten, have at all times existed, in considerable profusion: neither can the fact of a clothed animal, Marquis or other, having acted in that capacity to never such lengths, entitle him to mention in History. We pass over these. Beppo, or as we must now learn to call him, the Count, appears at Venice, at Marseilles, at Madrid, Cadiz, Lisbon, Brussels; makes scientific pilgrimage to Quack Saint-Germain in Westphalia, religious-commercial to Saint Saint-James in Compostella, to Our Lady in Loretto: south, north, east, west, he shows himself; finds everywhere Lubricity and Stupidity (better or worse provided with cash), the two elements on which he thaumaturgically can work and live. Practice makes perfection; Beppo too was an apt scholar. By all methods he can awaken the stagnant imagination; cast maddening powder in the eyes.

Already in Rome he has cultivated whiskers, and put-on the uniform of a Prussian Colonel: dame Lorenza is fair to look upon; but how much fairer, if by the air of distance and dignity you lend enchantment to her! In other places, the

Count appears as real Count; as Marquis Pellegrini (lately from foreign parts); as Count this and Count that, Count Proteus-Incognito; finally as Count Alessandro Cagliostro.¹ Figure him shooting through the world with utmost rapidity; ducking-under here, when the sword-fishes of Justice make a dart at him; ducking-up yonder, in new shape, at the distance of a thousand miles; not unprovided with forged vouchers of respectability; above all, with that best voucher of respectability, a four-horse carriage, beef-eaters, and open purse, for Count Cagliostro has ready-money and pays his way. At some Hotel of the Sun, Hotel of the Angel, Gold Lion, or Green Goose, or whatever Hotel it is, in whatever world-famous capital City, his chariot-wheels have rested; sleep and food have refreshed his live-stock, chiefly the pearl and soul thereof, his indispensable Lorenza, now no longer Dame Lorenza, but Countess Seraphina, looking seraphic enough! Moneyed Donothings, whereof in this vexed Earth there are many, ever lounging about such places, scan and comment on the foreign coat-of-arms; ogle the fair foreign woman; who timidly recoils from their gaze, timidly responds to their reverences, as in halls and passages, they obsequiously throw themselves in her way: erelong one moneyed Donothing, from amid his tags and tassels, sword-belts, fop-tackle, frizzled hair without brains beneath it, is heard speaking to another: "Seen the Countess?—Divine creature that!"—and so the game is begun.

Let not the too sanguine reader, meanwhile, fancy that it is all holiday and heyday with his Lordship. The course of scoundrelism, any more than that of true love, never did run smooth. Seasons there may be when Count Proteus-Incognito has his epaulettes torn from his shoulders; his

¹ Not altogether an *invention* this last; for his granduncle (a bellfounder at Messina?) was actually surnamed *Cagliostro*, as well as named *Giuseppe*.—O. Y.

garment-skirts clipt close by the buttocks; and is bid sternly tarry at Jericho till his beard be grown. Harpies of Law defile his solemn feasts; his light burns languid; for a space seems utterly snuffed out, and dead in malodorous vapour. Dead only to blaze up the brighter! There is scoundrel-life in Beppo Cagliostro; cast him among the mud, tread him out of sight there, the miasmata do but stimulate and refresh him, he rises sneezing, is strong and young again.

Behold him, for example, again in Palermo, after having seen many men and many lands; and how he again escapes thence. Why did he return to Palermo? Perhaps to astonish old friends by new grandeur; or for temporary shelter, if the Continent were getting hot for him; or perhaps in the mere way of general trade. He is seized there, and clapt in prison, for those foolish old businesses of the treasure-digging Goldsmith, of the forged Will.

‘The manner of his escape,’ says one, whose few words on this obscure matter are so many light-points for us, ‘deserves to be described. The Son of one of the first Sicilian Princes, and great landed Proprietors (who moreover had filled important stations at the Neapolitan Court), was a person that united with a strong body and ungovernable temper all the tyrannical caprice, which the rich and great, without cultivation, think themselves entitled to exhibit.

‘Donna Lorenza had contrived to gain this man; and on him the fictitious Marchese Pellegrini founded his security. The Prince testified openly that he was the protector of this stranger pair: but what was his fury when Joseph Balsamo, at the instance of those whom he had cheated, was cast into prison! He tried various means to deliver him; and as these would not prosper, he publicly, in the President’s antechamber, threatened the plaintiffs’ Advocate with the frightfulest misusage if the suit were not dropt, and Balsamo forthwith set at liberty. As the Advocate declined such proposal, he clutched him, beat him, threw him on the floor, trampled him with his feet, and

could hardly be restrained from still farther outrages, when the President himself came running out at the tumult, and commanded peace.

‘This latter, a weak, dependent man, made no attempt to punish the injurer; the plaintiffs and their Advocate grew fainthearted; and Balsamo was let go; not so much as a registration in the Court-Books specifying his dismissal, who occasioned it, or how it took place.’²

Thus sometimes, a friend in the court is better than a penny in the purse! Marchese Pellegrini ‘quickly thereafter left Palermo, and performed various travels, whereof ‘my author could impart no clear information.’ Whether, or how far, the Game-chicken Prince went with him is not hinted.

So it might, at times, be quite otherwise than in coach-and-four that our Cagliostro journeyed. Occasionally we find him as outrider journeying on horseback; only Seraphina and her sop (whom she is to suck and eat) lolling on carriage-cushions; the hardy Count glad that hereby he can have the shot paid. Nay sometimes he looks utterly poverty-struck, and has to journey one knows not how. Thus one briefest but authentic-looking glimpse of him presents itself in England, in the year 1772: no Count is he here, but mere Signor Balsamo again; engaged in house-painting, for which he has a most peculiar talent. Was it true that he painted the country-house of ‘a Doctor Benemore,’ and having not painted, but only smeared it, was refused payment, and got a lawsuit with expenses instead? If Doctor Benemore have left any representatives in this Earth, they are desired to speak out. We add only, that if young Beppo had one of the prettiest wives, old Benemore had one of the ugliest daughters; and so, putting one thing to another, matters might not be so bad.

² Goethe's *Werke*, b. xxviii. 132.

For it is to be observed, that the Count, on his own side, even in his days of highest splendour, is not idle. Faded dames of quality have many wants: the Count has not studied in the convent Laboratory, or pilgrimed to the Count Saint-Germain, in Westphalia, to no purpose. With loftiest condescension he stoops to impart somewhat of his supernatural secrets,—for a consideration. Rowland's Kalydor is valuable; but what to the Beautifying-water of Count Alessandro! He that will undertake to smooth wrinkles, and make withered green parchment into a fair carnation skin, is he not one whom faded dames of quality will delight to honour? Or again, let the Beautifying-water succeed or not, have not such dames, if calumny may be in aught believed, *another* want? This want, too, the indefatigable Cagliostro will supply,—for a consideration. For faded gentlemen of quality the Count likewise has help. Not a charming Countess alone; but a 'Wine of Egypt' (cantharides not being unknown to him), sold in drops, more precious than nectar; which what faded gentleman of quality would not purchase with anything short of life? Consider now what may be done with potions, washes, charms, love-philtres, among a class of mortals, idle from the mother's womb; rejoicing to be taught the Ionic dances, and meditating of love from their tender nails!

Thus waxing, waning, broad-shining, or extinct, an inconstant but unwearied Moon, rides on its course the Cagliostropic star. Thus are Count and Countess busy in their vocation; thus do they spend the golden season of their youth,—shall we say, 'for the Greatest Happiness of the greatest number'? Happy enough, had there been no sumptuary or adultery or swindlery Law-acts; no Heaven above, no Hell beneath; no flight of Time, and gloomy land of Eld and Destitution and Desperation, towards which, by

law of Fate, they see themselves, at all moments, with frightful regularity, unaidably drifting.

The prudent man provides against the inevitable. Already Count Cagliostro, with his love-philtres, his cantharidic Wine of Egypt; nay far earlier, by his blue-flames and divining-rods, as with the poor sheep Goldsmith of Palermo; and ever since, by many a significant hint thrown out where the scene suited,—has dabbled in the Supernatural. As his seraphic Countess gives signs of withering, and one luxuriant branch of industry will die and drop off, others must be pushed into budding. Whether it was in England during what he called his ‘first visit’ in the year 1776 (for the before-first, house-smearing visit was, reason or none, to go for nothing) that he first thought of Prophecy as a trade, is unknown: certain enough, he had begun to practise it then; and this indeed not without a glimpse of insight into the English national character. Various, truly, are the pursuits of mankind; whereon they would fain, unfolding the future, take Destiny by surprise: with us, however, as a nation of shopkeepers, they may be all said to centre in this one, *Put money in thy purse!* O for a Fortunatus’-Pocket, with its ever-new coined gold;—if, indeed, the true prayer were not rather: O for a Crassus’-Drink, of *liquid* gold, that so the accursed throat of Avarice might for once have enough and to spare! Meanwhile whoso should engage, keeping clear of the gallows, to teach men the secret of making money, were not he a Professor sure of audience? Strong were the general Scepticism; still stronger the general Need and Greed. Count Cagliostro, from his residence in Whitcombe Street, it is clear, had looked into the mysteries of the Little-go; by occult science knew the lucky number. Bish as yet was not; but Lotteries were; gulls also were. The Count has his Language-master, his Portu-

guese Jew, his nondescript Ex-Jesuits, whom he puts forth as antennæ, into coffee-houses, to stir-up the minds of men. 'Lord' Scott (a swindler swindled), and Miss Fry, and many others, were they here, could tell what it cost them: nay, the very Lawbooks, and Lord Mansfield and Mr. Howarth speak of hundreds, and jewel-boxes, and quite handsome booties. Thus can the bustard pluck geese, and, if Law do get the carcass, live upon their giblets;—now and then, however, finds a vulture, too tough to pluck.

The attentive reader is no doubt curious to understand all the What and the How of Cagliostro's procedure while England was the scene. As we too are, and have been; but unhappily all in vain. To that English *Life* of uncertain gender none, as was said, need in their utmost extremity repair. Scarcely the very lodging of Cagliostro can be ascertained; except incidentally that it was once in Whitcombe Street; for a few days, in Warwick Court, Holborn; finally, for some space, in the King's Bench Jail. Vain were it, meanwhile, for any reverencer of genius to pilgrim thither, seeking memorials of a great man. Cagliostro is clean gone: on the strictest search, no token never so faint discloses itself. He went, and left nothing behind him;—except perhaps a few cast-clothes, and other inevitable exuviæ, long since, not indeed annihilated (this nothing can be), yet beaten into mud, and spread as new soil over the general surface of Middlesex and Surrey; floated by the Thames into old Ocean; or flitting, the gaseous parts of them, in the universal Atmosphere, borne thereby to remotest corners of the Earth, or beyond the limits of the Solar System! So fleeting is the track and habitation of man; so wondrous the stuff he builds of; his house, his very house of houses (what we call his *body*), were he the first of

geniuses, will evaporate in the strangest manner, and vanish even whither we have said.

To us on our side, however, it is cheering to discover, for one thing, that Cagliostro found antagonists worthy of him: the bustard plucking geese, and living on their gibbets, found not our whole Island peopled with geese, but here and there, as above hinted, with vultures, with hawks of still sharper quality than his. Priddle, Aylett, Saunders, O'Reilly: let these stand forth as the vindicators of English national character. By whom Count Alessandro Cagliostro, as in dim fluctuating outline indubitably appears, was bewrittled, arrested, fleeced, hatchelled, bewildered and be-devilled, till the very Jail of King's Bench seemed a refuge from them. A wholly obscure contest, as was natural; wherein, however, to all candid eyes the vulturous and falconish character of our Isle fully asserts itself; and the foreign Quack of Quacks, with all his thaumaturgic Hemp-silks, Lottery-numbers, Beauty-waters, Seductions, Phosphorus-boxes, and Wines of Egypt, is seen matched, and nigh throttled, by the natural unassisted cunning of English Attorneys. Whereupon the bustard, feeling himself so pecked and plucked, takes wing, and flies to foreign parts.

One good thing he has carried with him, notwithstanding: initiation into some primary arcana of Freemasonry. The Quack of Quacks, with his primitive bias towards the supernatural-mystificatory, must long have had his eye on Masonry; which, with its blazonry and mummary, sashes, drawn sabres, brothers Terrible, brothers Venerable (the whole so imposing by candle-light), offered the choicest element for him. All men profit by *Union* with men; the quack as much as another; nay in these two words, *Sworn Secrecy*, alone has he not found a very talisman! Cagliostro, then, determines on Masonship. It was afterwards

urged that the Lodge to which he and his Seraphina got admission, for she also was made a Mason, or Masoness, and had a riband-garter solemnly bound on, with order to sleep in it for a night,—was a Lodge of low rank in the social scale; numbering not a few of the pastrycook and hair-dresser species. To which it could only be replied, that these alone spoke French; that a man and mason, though he cooked pastry, was still a man and mason. Be this as it might, the apt Recipientary is rapidly promoted through the three grades of Apprentice, Companion, Master; at the cost of five guineas. That of his being first raised into the air, by means of a rope and pulley fixed in the ceiling, ‘during which the heavy mass of his body must assuredly have caused him a dolorous sensation;’ and then being forced blindfold to shoot himself (though with privily *dis*loaded pistol), in sign of courage and obedience: all this we can esteem an apocrypha,—palmed on the Roman Inquisition, otherwise prone to delusion. Five guineas, and some foolish froth-speeches, delivered over liquor and otherwise, was the cost. If you ask now, In *what* London Lodge was it? Alas, we know not, and shall never know. Certain only that Count Alessandro *is* a master-mason; that having once crossed the threshold, his plastic genius will not stop there. Behold, accordingly, he has bought from a ‘Bookseller’ certain manuscripts belonging to ‘one George Cofton, a man absolutely unknown to him’ and to us, which treat of the ‘Egyptian Masonry’! In other words, Count Alessandro will *blow* with his new five-guinea bellows; having always occasion to raise the wind.

With regard specially to that huge soap-bubble of an Egyptian Masonry which he blew, and as conjuror caught many flies with, it is our painful duty to say a little; not much. The Inquisition-Biographer, with deadly fear of

heretical and democratical and black-magical Freemasons before his eyes, has gone into the matter to boundless depths; commenting, elucidating, even confuting: a certain expository masonic Order-Book of Cagliostro's, which he has laid hand on, opens the whole mystery to him. The ideas he declares to be Cagliostro's; the composition all a Disciple's, for the Count had no gift that way. What, then, does the Disciple set forth,—or, at lowest, the Inquisition-Biographer say that he sets forth? Much, much that is not to the point.

Understand, however, that once inspired, by the absolutely unknown George Cofton, with the notion of Egyptian Masonry, wherein as yet lay much 'magic and superstition,' Count Alessandro resolves to free it of these impious ingredients, and make it a kind of Last Evangel, or Renovator of the Universe,—which so needed renovation. 'As he did not believe anything in matter of Faith,' says our wooden Familiar, 'nothing could arrest him.' True enough: how did he move along, then; to what length did he go?

'In his system he promises his followers to conduct them to *perfection*, by means of a *physical and moral regeneration*; to enable them by the former (or physical) to find the *prime matter*, or Philosopher's Stone, and the *acacia* which consolidates in man the forces of the most vigorous youth, and renders him immortal; and by the latter (or moral) to procure them a Pentagon, which shall restore man to his primitive state of innocence, lost by original sin. The Founder supposes that this Egyptian Masonry was instituted by Enoch and Elias, who propagated it in different parts of the world: however, in time, it lost much of its purity and splendour. And so, by degrees, the Masonry of men had been reduced to pure buffoonery; and that of women been almost entirely destroyed, having now for most part no place in common Masonry. Till at last, the zeal of the *Grand Cophta* (so are the High-priests of Egypt named) had signalised itself by restoring the Masonry of both sexes to its pristine lustre.'

With regard to the great question of constructing this invaluable Pentagón, which is to abolish Original Sin: how you have to choose a solitary mountain, and call it Sinai; and build a Pavilion on it to be named Sion, with twelve sides, in every side a window, and three stories, one of which is named Ararat; and there, with Twelve Masters, each at a window, yourself in the middle of them, to go through unspeakable formalities, vigils, removals, fasts, toils, distresses, and hardly get your Pentagón after all,—with regard to this great question and construction, we shall say nothing. As little concerning the still grander and painfuller process of Physical Regeneration, or growing young again; a thing not to be accomplished without a forty-days course of medicine, purgations, sweating-baths, fainting-fits, root-diet, phlebotomy, starvation and desperation, more perhaps than it is all worth. Leaving these interior solemnities, and many high moral precepts of union, virtue, wisdom, and doctrines of immortality and what not, will the reader care to cast an indifferent glance on certain esoteric ceremonial parts of this Egyptian Masonry,—as the Inquisition-Biographer, if we miscellaneously cull from him, may enable us?

‘In all these ceremonial parts,’ huskily avers the wooden Biographer, ‘you find as much sacrilege, profanation, superstition and idolatry, as in common Masonry: invocations of the holy Name, prostrations, adorations lavished on the Venerable, or head of the Lodge; aspirations, insufflations, incense-burnings, fumigations, exorcisms of the Candidates and the garments they are to take; emblems of the sacrosanct Triad, of the Moon, of the Sun, of the Compass, Square, and a thousand-thousand other iniquities and ineptitudes, which are now well known in the world.’

‘We above made mention of the Grand Cophta. By this title has been designated the founder or restorer of Egyptian Masonry. Cagliostro made no difficulty in admitting’ (to me the Inquisitor) ‘that under such name he was himself meant: now in this system

the Grand Cophta is compared to the Highest: the most solemn acts of worship are paid him; he has authority over the Angels; he is invoked on all occasions; everything is done in virtue of his power; which you are assured he derives immediately from God. Nay more: among the various rites observed in this exercise of Masonry, you are ordered to recite the *Veni Creator spiritus*, the *Te Deum*, and some Psalms of David: to such an excess is impudence and audacity carried, that in the Psalm, *Memento, Domine, David et omnis mansuetudinis ejus*, every time the name David occurs, that of the Grand Cophta is to be substituted.

‘No Religion is excluded from the Egyptian Society: the Jew, the Calvinist, the Lutheran, can be admitted equally well with the Catholic, if so be they admit the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.’ ‘The men elevated to the rank of master take the names of the ancient Prophets; the women those of the Sibyls.’

* * ‘Then the grand Mistress blows on the face of the female Recipiendary, all along from brow to chin, and says: “I give you this breath, to cause to germinate and become alive in your heart the Truth which we possess; to fortify in you the” &c. &c. “Guardian of the new Knowledge which we prepare to make you partake of, by the sacred names of *Helios, Mene, Tetragrammaton*.”

‘In the *Essai sur les Illuminés*, printed at Paris in 1789, I read that these latter words were suggested to Cagliostro as Arabic or Sacred ones by a Sleight-of-hand Man, who said that he was assisted by a spirit, and added that this spirit was the Soul of a Cabalist Jew, who by art-magic had killed his pig before the Christian Advent.’

* * ‘They take a young lad, or a girl who is in the state of innocence, such they call the *Pupil* or the *Columb*; the Venerable communicates to him the power he would have had before the Fall of Man; which power consists mainly in commanding the pure Spirits; these Spirits are to the number of seven: it is said they surround the Throne; and that they govern the Seven Planets: their names are Anael, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel, Zobiachel, Anachiel.’

Or would the reader wish to see this *Columb* in action? She can act in two ways; either behind a curtain, behind a hieroglyphically-painted Screen with ‘table and three candles;’ or as here ‘before the Caraffe,’ and showing face.

If the miracle fail, it can only be because she is not ‘in the state of innocence,’—an accident much to be guarded against. This scene is at Mittau in Courland;—we find, indeed, that it is a *Pupil* affair, not a *Columb* one; but for the rest, that is perfectly indifferent :

‘Cagliostro accordingly (it is his own story still) brought a little Boy into the Lodge; son of a nobleman there. He placed him on his knees before a table, whereon stood a Bottle of pure water, and behind this some lighted candles: he made an exorcism round the Boy, put his hand on his head: and both, in this attitude, addressed their prayers to God for the happy accomplishment of the work. Having then bid the child look into the Bottle, directly the child cried that he saw a garden. Knowing hereby that Heaven assisted him, Cagliostro took courage, and bade the child ask of God the grace to see the Angel Michael. At first the child said: “I see something white; I know not what it is.” Then he began jumping, stamping like a possessed creature, and cried: “There now! I see a child, like myself, that seems to have something angelical.” All the assembly, and Cagliostro himself, remained speechless with emotion. * * * The child being anew exorcised, with the hands of the Venerable on his head, and the customary prayers addressed to Heaven, he looked into the Bottle, and said, he saw his Sister at that moment coming down stairs, and embracing one of her brothers. That appeared impossible, the brother in question being then hundreds of miles off: however, Cagliostro felt not disconcerted; said they might send to the country-house where the sister was, and see.”³

Wonderful enough. Here, however, a fact rather suddenly transpires, which, as the Inquisition-Biographer well urges, must serve to undeceive all believers in Cagliostro; at least, call a blush into their cheeks. It seems: ‘The ‘Grand Cophta, the restorer, the propagator of Egyptian ‘Masonry, Count Cagliostro himself, testifies, in most part ‘of his System, the profoundest respect for the Patriarch

³ *Vie de Joseph Balsamo, traduite d'après l'original Italien*, ch. ii. iii. (Paris, 1791.)

‘Moses: *and yet* this same Cagliostro affirmed before his judges that he had always felt the insurmountablest antipathy to Moses; and attributes this hatred to his constant opinion, that Moses was a thief for having carried-off the Egyptian vessels; which opinion, in spite of all the luminous arguments that were opposed to him to show how erroneous it was, he has continued to hold with an invincible obstinacy!’ How reconcile these two inconsistencies? Ay, how?

But to finish-off this Egyptian Masonic business, and bring it all to a focus, we shall now, for the first and for the last time, peep one moment through the spyglass of Monsieur de Luchet, in that *Essai sur les Illuminés* of his. The whole matter being so much of a chimera, how can it be painted otherwise than chimerically? Of the following passage one thing is true, that a creature of the seed of Adam believed it to be true. List, list, then; O list!

‘The Recipiendary is led by a darksome path, into an immense hall, the ceiling, the walls, the floor of which are covered by a black cloth, sprinkled over with red flames and menacing serpents: three sepulchral lamps emit, from time to time, a dying glimmer; and the eye half distinguishes, in this lugubrious den, certain wrecks of mortality suspended by funereal crape: a heap of skeletons forms in the centre a sort of altar; on both sides of it are piled books; some contain menaces against the perjured; others the deadly narrative of the vengeance which the Invisible Spirit has exacted; of the infernal evocations for a long time pronounced in vain.

‘Eight hours elapse. Then Phantoms, trailing mortuary veils, slowly cross the hall, and sink in caverns, without audible noise of trapdoors or of falling. You notice only that they are gone, by a fetid odour exhaled from them.

‘The Novice remains four-and-twenty hours in this gloomy abode, in the midst of a freezing silence. A rigorous fast has already weakened his thinking faculties. Liquors, prepared for the purpose, first

weary, and at length wear-out his senses. At his feet are placed three cups, filled with a drink of greenish colour. Necessity lifts them towards his lips; involuntary fear repels them.

‘At last appear two men; looked upon as the ministers of death. These gird the pale brow of the Recipient with an auroral-coloured riband, dipt in blood, and full of silvered characters mixed with the figure of Our Lady of Loretto. He receives a copper crucifix, of two inches length; to his neck are hung a sort of amulets, wrapped in violet cloth. He is stript of his clothes; which two ministering brethren deposit on a funeral pile, erected at the other end of the hall. With blood, on his naked body, are traced crosses. In this state of suffering and humiliation, he sees approaching with large strides five Phantoms, armed with swords, and clad in garments dropping blood. Their faces are veiled: they spread a carpet on the floor; kneel there; pray; and remain with outstretched hands crossed on their breast, and face fixed on the ground, in deep silence. An hour passes in this painful attitude. After which fatiguing trial, plaintive cries are heard; the funeral pile takes fire, yet casts only a pale light; the garments are thrown on it and burnt. A colossal and almost transparent Figure rises from the very bosom of the pile. At sight of it, the five prostrated men fall into convulsions insupportable to look on; the too faithful image of those foaming struggles wherein a mortal, at handgrips with a sudden pain, ends by sinking under it.

‘Then a trembling voice pierces the vault, and articulates the formula of those execrable oaths that are to be sworn: my pen falters; I think myself almost guilty to retrace them.’

O Luchet, what a taking! Is there no hope left, thinkest thou? Thy brain is all gone to addled albumen; help seems none, if not in that last mother’s-bosom of all the ruined: Brandy-and-water!—An unfeeling world may laugh; but ought to recollect that, forty years ago, these things were sad realities,—in the heads of many men.

As to the execrable oaths, this seems the main one: ‘Honour and respect *Aqua Toffana*, as a sure, prompt and necessary means of purging the Globe, by the death or

‘the hebetation of such as endeavour to debase the Truth, or snatch it from our hands.’ And so the catastrophe ends by bathing our poor half-dead Recipiendary first in blood, then, after some genuflexions, in water; and ‘serving him a repast composed of roots,’—we grieve to say, mere potatoes-and-point!

Figure now all this boundless cunningly devised Agglomerate of royal-arches, death’s-heads, hieroglyphically painted screens, *Columbs* in the state of innocence; with spacious masonic halls, dark, or in the favourablest theatrical light-and-dark; Kircher’s magic-lantern, Belshazzar hand-writings, of phosphorus: ‘plaintive tones,’ gong-beatings; hoary beard of a supernatural Grand Cophta emerging from the gloom;—and how it acts, not only indirectly through the foolish senses of men, but directly on their Imagination; connecting itself with Enoch and Elias, with Philanthropy, Immortality, Eleutheromania, and Adam Weisshaupt’s Illuminati, and so downwards to the infinite Deep: figure all this; and in the centre of it, sitting eager and alert, the skilfulest Panourgos, working the mighty chaos, into a creation—of ready-money. In such a wide plastic ocean of sham and foam had the Archquack now happily begun to envelop himself.

Accordingly he goes forth prospering and to prosper. Arrived in any City, he has but by masonic grip to accredit himself with the Venerable of the place; and, not by degrees as formerly, but in a single night, is introduced in Grand Lodge to all that is fattest and foolishest far or near; and in the fittest arena, a gilt-pasteboard Masonic hall. There between the two pillars of Jachin and Boaz, can the great Sheepstealer see his whole flock of Dupeables assembled in one penfold; affectionately blatant, licking the hand they are to bleed by. Victorious Acharat-Beppo! The

genius of Amazement, moreover, has now shed her glory round him; he is radiant-headed, a supernatural by his very gait. Behold him everywhere welcomed with vivats, or in awestruck silence: gilt-pasteboard Freemasons receive him under the Steel-Arch of crossed sabres; he mounts to the Seat of the Venerable; holds high discourse hours long, on Masonry, Morality, Universal Science, Divinity, and Things in general, with 'a sublimity, an emphasis and unction,' proceeding, it appears, 'from the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost.' Then there are Egyptian Lodges to be founded, corresponded with,—a thing involving expense; elementary fractions of many a priceless arcanum, nay if the place will stand it, of the Pentagon itself, can be given to the purified in life: how gladly would he *give* them, but they have to be brought from the uttermost ends of the world, and cost money. Now too, with what tenfold impetuosity do all the old trades of Egyptian Drops, Beauty-waters, Secret-favours, expand themselves, and rise in price! Life-weary moneyed Donothing, this seraphic Countess is Grand Priestess of the Egyptian Female Lodges; has a touch of the supramundane Undine in her: among all thy intrigues, hadst thou ever yet Endymion-like an intrigue with the lunar Diana,—called also Hecate? And thou, O antique, much-loving faded Dowager, *this* Squire-of-dames can, it appears probable, command the Seven Angels, Uriel, Anachiel and Company; at lowest, has the eyes of all Europe fixed on him!—The dog pockets money enough, and can seem to despise money.

To us, much meditating on the matter, it seemed perhaps strangest of all, how Count Cagliostro, received under the Steel Arch, could hold Discourses, of from one to three hours long, on Universal Science, of such unction, we do not say as to seem inspired by the Holy Spirit, but as not to get him lugged out of doors directly after his first head

of method, and drowned in whole oceans of salt-and-water. The man could not speak; only babble in long-winded diffusions, chaotic circumvolutions tending nowhither. He had no thought for speaking with; he had not even a language. His Sicilian Italian, and Laquais-de-place French, garnished with shreds from all European dialects, was wholly intelligible to no mortal; a Tower-of-Babel jargon, which made many think him a kind of Jew. But indeed, with the language of Greeks, or of Angels, what better were it? The man, once for all, has no articulate utterance; that tongue of his emits noises enough, but no speech. Let him begin the plainest story, his stream stagnates at the first stage; chafes, "ahem! ahem!" loses itself in the earth; or, bursting over, flies abroad without bank or channel,—into separate splashes. Not a stream, but a lake, a wide-spread indefinite marsh. His whole thought is confused, inextricable; what thought, what resemblance of thought he has, cannot deliver itself, except in gasps, blustering gushes, spasmodic refluxes, which make bad worse. Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble: how thou bubblest, foolish 'Bubblyjock'! Hear him once, and on a dead-lift occasion, as the Inquisition Gurney reports it:

“I mean and I wish to mean, that even as those who honour their father and mother, and respect the sovereign Pontiff, are blessed of God; even so all that I did, I did it by the order of God, with the power which he vouchsafed me, and to the advantage of God and of Holy Church; and I mean to give the proofs of all that I have done and said, not only physically but morally, by showing that as I have served God for God and by the power of God, he has given me at last the counterpoison to confound and combat Hell; for I know no other enemies than those that are in Hell, and if I am wrong, the Holy Father will punish me; if I am right, he will reward me; and if the Holy Father could get into his hands tonight these answers of mine, I predict to all brethren, believers and unbelievers, that I

should be at liberty tomorrow morning." Being desired to give these proofs then, he answered: "To prove that I have been chosen of God as an apostle to defend and propagate religion, I say that as the Holy Church has instituted pastors to demonstrate in face of the world that she is the true Catholic faith, even so, having operated with approbation and by the counsel of pastors of the Holy Church, I am, as I said, fully justified in regard to all my operations; and these pastors have assured me that my Egyptian Order was divine, and deserved to be formed into an Order sanctioned by the Holy Father, as I said in another interrogatory."

How then, in the name of wonder, said we, could such a babbling, bubbling Turkey-cock speak 'with unction'?

Two things here are to be taken into account. First, the difference between speaking and public speaking; a difference altogether generic. Secondly, the wonderful power of a certain audacity, often named impudence. Was it never thy hard fortune, good Reader, to attend any Meeting convened for Public purposes; any Bible-Society, Reform, Conservative, Thatched-Tavern, Hogg Dinner, or other such Meeting? Thou hast seen some full-fed Long-ear, by free determination or on sweet constraint, start to his legs, and give voice. Well aware wert thou that there was not, had not been, could not be, in that entire ass-cranium of his any fraction of an idea: nevertheless mark him. If at first an ominous haze flit round, and nothing, not even nonsense, dwell in his recollection,—heed it not; let him but plunge desperately on, the spell is broken. Commonplaces enough are at hand: 'labour of love,' 'rights of suffering millions,' 'throne and altar,' 'divine gift of song,' or what else it may be; the Meeting, by its very *name*, has environed itself in a given element of Commonplace. But anon, behold how his talking-organs get heated, and the friction vanishes; cheers, applauses, with the previous dinner and strong drink, raise

him to height of noblest temper. And now, as for your vociferous Dullard is easiest of all, let him keep on the soft, safe *parallel* course; parallel to the Truth, or nearly so; for Heaven's sake, not in *contact* with it: no obstacle will meet him; on the favouring given element of Commonplace he triumphantly careers.

He is as the ass, whom you took and cast headlong into the water: the water at first threatens to swallow him; but he finds, to his astonishment, that he can *swim* therein, that it is buoyant and bears him along. One sole condition is indispensable: audacity, vulgarly called impudence. Our ass must *commit* himself to his watery 'element;' in free daring, strike-forth his four limbs from him: then shall he not drown and sink, but shoot gloriously forward, and swim, to the admiration of bystanders. The ass, safely landed on the other bank, shakes his rough hide, wonder-struck himself at the faculty that lay in him, and waves joyfully his long ears: so too the public speaker. Cagliostro, as we know him of old, is not without a certain blubbery oiliness of soul as of body, with vehemence lying under it; has the volublest, noisiest tongue; and in the audacity vulgarly called impudence is without a fellow. The Commonplaces of such Steel-Arch Meetings are soon at his finger-ends: that same blubbery oiliness, and vehemence lying under it, once give them an element and stimulus, are the very gift of a fluent public speaker—to Dupeables.

Here too let us mention a circumstance, not insignificant, if true, which it may readily enough be. In younger years, Beppo Balsamo once, it is recorded, took some pains to procure, 'from a country vicar,' under quite false pretences, 'a bit of cotton steeped in holy oils.' What could such bit of cotton steeped in holy oils do for him? An Unbeliever from any basis of conviction the unbelieving Beppo could never

be; but solely from stupidity and bad morals. Might there not lie in that chaotic blubbery nature of his, at the bottom of all, a certain musk-grain of real Superstitious Belief? How wonderfully such a musk-grain of Belief will flavour, and impregnate with seductive odour, a whole inward world of Quackery, so that every fibre thereof shall smell *musk*, is well known. No Quack can persuade like him who has himself some persuasion. Nay, so wondrous is the act of Believing, Deception and Self-deception must, rigorously speaking, coexist in all Quacks; and he perhaps were definable as the best Quack, in whom the smallest musk-grain of the latter would sufficiently flavour the largest mass of the former.

But indeed, as we know otherwise, was there not in Cagliostro a certain pinchbeck counterfeit of all that is golden and good in man, of somewhat even that is best? Cheers, and illuminated hieroglyphs, and the ravishment of thronging audiences, can make him maudlin; his very wickedness of practice will render him louder in eloquence of theory; and ‘philanthropy,’ ‘divine science,’ ‘depth of unknown worlds,’ ‘finer feelings of the heart,’ and suchlike shall draw tears from most asses of sensibility. Neither, indeed, is it of moment how *few* his elementary Common-places are, how empty his head is, so he but agitate it well: thus a lead-drop or two, put into the emptiest dry-bladder, and jingled to and fro, will make noise enough; and even, if skilfully jingled, a kind of martial music.

Such is the Cagliostropic palaver, that bewitches all manner of believing souls. If the ancient Father was named Chrysostom, or Mouth-of-Gold, be the modern Quack named Pinchbeckostom, or Mouth-of-Pinchbeck; in an Age of Bronze such metal finds elective affinities. On the whole, too, it is worth considering what element your Quack specially works in: the element of Wonder! The Genuine, be he artist or

artisan, works in the finitude of the Known; the Quack in the infinitude of the Unknown. And then how, in rapidest progression, he grows and advances, once start him! Your name is up, says the adage; you may lie in bed. A nimbus of renown and preternatural astonishment envelops Cagliostro; enchants the general eye. The few reasoning mortals scattered here and there who see through him, deafened in the universal hubbub, shut their lips in sorrowful disdain; confident in the grand remedy, Time. The Enchanter meanwhile rolls on his way; what boundless materials of Deceptibility, what greediness and ignorance, especially what prurient brute-mindedness, exist over Europe in this the most deceivable of modern ages, are stirred up, fermenting in his behoof. He careers onward as a Comet; his nucleus, of paying and praising Dupes, embraces, in long radius, what city and province he rests over; his thinner tail, of wondering and curious Dupes, stretches into remotest lands. Good Lavater, from amid his Swiss Mountains, could say of him: ‘Cagliostro, a man; and a man such as few are; in whom, however, I am not a believer. O that he were simple of heart and humble, like a child; that he had feeling for the simplicity of the Gospel, and the majesty of the Lord (*Hoheit des Herrn*)! Who were so great as he? Cagliostro often tells what is not true, and promises what he does not perform. Yet do I nowise hold his operations as deception, though they are not what he calls them.’⁴ If good Lavater could so say of him, what must others have been saying!

Comet-wise, progressing with loud flourish of kettle-drums, everywhere under the Steel-Arch, evoking spirits, transmuting metals (to such as could stand it), the Arch-quack has traversed Saxony; at Leipzig has run athwart

⁴ *Lettre du Comte Mirabeau sur Cagliostro et Lavater*, p. 42. (Berlin, 1786.)

the hawser of a brother quack (poor Schröpfer, here scarcely recognisable as 'Scieffert'), and wrecked him. Through Eastern Germany, Prussian Poland, he progresses; and so now at length, in the spring of 1780, has arrived at Petersburg. His pavilion is erected here, his flag prosperously hoisted: Mason-lodges have long ears; he is distributing, as has now become his wont, Spagiric Food, medicine for the poor; a train-oil Prince, Potemkin or something like him, for accounts are dubious, feels his chops water over a seraphic Seraphina: all goes merry, and promises the best. But in those despotic countries, the Police is so arbitrary! Cagliostro's thaumaturgy must be overhauled by the Empress's Physician (Mouncey, a hard Annandale Scot); is found nought, the Spagiric Food unfit for a dog: and so, the whole particulars of his Lordship's conduct being put together, the result is, that he must leave Petersburg, in a given brief term of hours. Happy for him that it was so brief: scarcely is he gone, till the Prussian Ambassador appears with a complaint, that he has falsely assumed the Prussian uniform at Rome; the Spanish Ambassador with a still graver complaint, that he has forged bills at Cadiz. However, he is safe over the marches: let them complain their fill.

In Courland, and in Poland, great things await him; yet not unalloyed by two small reverses. The famed Countess von der Recke, a born Fair Saint, what the Germans call *Schöne Seele*, as yet quite young in heart and experience, but broken down with grief for departed friends,—seeks to question the world-famous Spirit-summoner on the secrets of the Invisible Kingdoms; whither, with fond strained eyes, she is incessantly looking. The *galimathias* of Pinchbeckostom cannot impose on this pure-minded simple woman: she recognises the Quack in him, and in a printed Book makes

known the same: Mephisto's mortifying experience with Margaret, as above foretold, renews itself for Cagliostro.⁵ At Warsaw too, though he discourses on Egyptian Masonry, on Medical Philosophy, and the ignorance of Doctors, and performs successfully with *Pupil* and *Columb*, a certain 'Count M.' cherishes more than doubt; which ends in certainty, in a written *Cagliostro Unmasked*. The Archquack, triumphant, sumptuously feasted in the city, has retired with a chosen set of believers, with whom, however, was this unbelieving 'M.,' into the country; to transmute metals, to prepare perhaps the Pentagon itself. All that night, before leaving Warsaw, 'our dear Master' had spent conversing with spirits. Spirits? cries 'M.:' Not he; but melting ducats: he has a melted mass of them in this crucible, which now, by sleight of hand, he would fain substitute for that other, filled, as you all saw, with red-lead, carefully luted down, smelted, set to cool, smuggled from among our hands, and now (look at it, ye asses!)—found broken and hidden among these bushes!

Neither does the Pentagon, or Elixir of Life, or whatever it was, prosper better. 'Our sweet Master enters into 'expostulation:' 'swears by his great God, and his honour, 'that he will finish the work and make us happy. He 'carries his modesty so far as to propose that he shall 'work with chains on his feet; and consents to lose his 'life, by the hands of his disciples, if before the end of 'the *fourth passage*, his word be not made good. He lays 'his hand on the ground, and kisses it; holds it up to Heaven, and again takes God to witness that he speaks true; 'calls on Him to exterminate him if he lies.' A vision of the hoary-bearded Grand Cophta himself makes night solemn. In vain! The sherds of that broken red-lead cru-

⁵ *Zeitgenossen*, No. 15. § *Frau von der Recke*!

cible, which pretends to stand here unbroken half-full of silver, lie *there*, before your eyes: that 'resemblance of a sleeping child,' grown visible in the magic cooking of our Elixir, proves to be an inserted rosemary-leaf; the Grand Cophta cannot be gone too soon.

Count 'M.,' balancing towards the opposite extreme, even thinks him inadequate as a Quack:

'Far from being modest,' says this Unmasker, 'he brags beyond expression, in anybody's presence, especially in women's, of the grand faculties he possesses. Every word is an exaggeration, or a statement you feel to be improbable. The smallest contradiction puts him in fury: his vanity breaks through on all sides; he lets you give him a festival that sets the whole city a-talking. Most impostors are supple, and endeavour to gain friends. This one, you might say, studies to appear arrogant, to make all men enemies, by his rude injurious speeches, by the squabbles and grudges he introduces among friends.' 'He quarrels with his coadjutors for trifles; fancies that a simple giving of the lie will persuade the public that they are liars.' 'Schröpfer at Leipzig was far cleverer.' 'He should get some ventriloquist for assistant: should read some Books of Chemistry; study the Tricks of Philadelphia and Comus.'⁶

Fair advices, good 'M.;' but do not you yourself admit that he has a 'natural genius for deception;' above all things 'a forehead of brass (*front d'airain*), which nothing can disconcert'? To such a genius, and such a brow, Comus and Philadelphia, and all the ventriloquists in Nature, can add little. Give the Archquack his due. These arrogancies of his prove only that he is mounted on his high horse, and has now the world under him.

Such reverses, which will occur in the lot of every man, are, for our Cagliostro, but as specks in the blaze of the meridian Sun. With undimmed lustre he is, as heretofore,

⁶ *Cagliostro démasqué à Varsovie, en 1780, pp. 35 et seq. (Paris, 1786.)*

handed-over from this 'Prince P.' to that Prince Q.; among which high believing potentates, what is an incredulous 'Count M.'? His pockets are distended with ducats and diamonds: he is off to Vienna, to Frankfort, to Strasburg, by extra-post; and there also will work miracles. 'The train he commonly took with him,' says the Inquisition-Biographer, 'corresponded to the rest; he always travelled post, with a considerable suite: couriers, lackeys, body-servants, domestics of all sorts, sumptuously dressed, gave an air of reality to the high birth he vaunted. The very liveries he got made at Paris cost twenty *louis* each. Apartments furnished in the height of the mode; a magnificent table, open to numerous guests; rich dresses for himself and his wife, corresponded to this luxurious way of life. His feigned generosity likewise made a great noise. Often he gratuitously doctored the poor, and even gave them alms.'

In the inside of all this splendid travelling and lodging economy are to be seen, as we know, two suspicious-looking rouged or unrouged figures, of a Count and a Countess; lolling on their cushions there, with a jaded, haggard kind of aspect; they eye one another sullenly, in silence, with a scarce-suppressed indignation; for each thinks the other does not work enough and eats too much. Whether Dame Lorenza followed her peculiar side of the business with reluctance or with free alacrity, is a moot-point among Biographers: not so that, with her choleric adipose Archquack, she had a sour life of it, and brawling abounded. If we look still farther inwards, and try to penetrate the inmost self-consciousness, what in another man would be called the conscience, of the Archquack himself, the view gets most uncertain; little or nothing to be seen but a thick fallacious haze. Which indeed *was* the main thing extant there. Much

⁷ *Vie de Joseph Balsamo*, p. 41.

in the Count Front-d'airain remains dubious; yet hardly this: his want of clear insight into anything, most of all into his own inner man. Cunning in the supreme degree he has; intellect next to none. Nay, is not cunning (couple it with an esurient character) the natural consequence of *defective* intellect? It is properly the vehement exercise of a short, poor vision; of an intellect sunk, bemired; which can attain to no free vision, otherwise it would lead the esurient man to be honest.

Meanwhile gleams of muddy light will occasionally visit all mortals; every living creature (according to Milton, the very Devil) has some more or less faint resemblance of a Conscience; must make inwardly certain auricular confessions, absolutions, professions of faith,—were it only that he does not yet quite loathe, and so proceed to hang himself. What such a Porcus as Cagliostro might specially feel, and think, and *be*, were difficult in any case to say; much more when contradiction and mystification, designed and unavoidable, so involve the matter. One of the most authentic documents preserved of him is the Picture of his Visage. An Effigies once universally diffused; in oil-paint, aquatint, marble, stucco, and perhaps gingerbread, decorating millions of apartments: of which remarkable Effigies one copy, engraved in the line-manner, happily still lies here. Fittest of visages; worthy to be worn by the Quack of Quacks! A most portentous face of scoundrelism: a fat, snub, abominable face; dew-lapped, flat-nosed, greasy, full of greediness, sensuality, oxlike obstinacy; a forehead impudent, refusing to be ashamed; and then two eyes turned up seraphically languishing, as in divine contemplation and adoration; a touch of quiz too: on the whole, perhaps the most perfect quack-face produced by the eighteenth century. There he sits, and seraphically languishes, with this epigraph:

*De l'Ami des Humains reconnaissez les traits :
Tous ses jours sont marqués par de nouveaux bienfaits,
Il prolonge la vie, il secourt l'indigence ;
Le plaisir d'être utile est seul sa récompense.*

A probable conjecture were, that this same Theosophy, Theophilanthropy, Solacement of the Poor, to which our Archquack now more and more betook himself, might serve not only as bird-lime for external game, but also half-unconsciously as salve for assuaging his own spiritual sores. Am not I a charitable man? could the Archquack say: if I have erred myself, have I not, by theosophic unctuous discourses, removed much cause of error? The lying, the quackery, what are these but the method of accommodating yourself to the temper of men; of getting their ear, their dull long ear, which Honesty had no chance to catch? Nay, at worst, is not this an unjust world; full of nothing but beasts of prey, four-footed or two-footed? Nature has commanded, saying: Man, help thyself. Ought not the man of my genius, since he was not born a Prince, since in these scandalous times he has not been elected a Prince, to make himself one? If not by open violence, for which he wants military force, then surely by superior science,—exercised in a private way. Heal the diseases of the Poor, the far deeper diseases of the Ignorant; in a word, found Egyptian Lodges, and get the means of founding them.—By such soliloquies can Count Front-of-brass Pinchbeckostom, in rare atrabiliar hours of self-questioning, compose himself. For the rest, such hours are rare: the Count is a man of action and digestion, not of self-questioning; usually the day brings its abundant task; there is no time for abstractions,—of the metaphysical sort.

Be this as it may, the Count has arrived at Strasburg; is working higher wonders than ever. At Strasburg, indeed,

in the year 1783, occurs his apotheosis; what we can call the culmination and Fourth Act of his Life-drama. He was here for a number of months; in full blossom and radiance, the envy and admiration of the world. In large hired hospitals, he with open drug-box containing 'Extract of Saturn,' and even with open purse, relieves the suffering poor; unfolds himself lamb-like, angelic to a believing few, of the rich classes; turns a silent minatory lion-face to unbelievers, were they of the richest. Medical miracles have in all times been common: but what miracle is this of an Oriental or Occidental Serene-Excellence, who, 'regardless of expense,' employs himself not in preserving game, but in curing sickness, in illuminating ignorance? Behold how he dives, at noonday, into the infectious hovels of the mean; and on the equipages, haughtinesses, and even dinner-invitations of the great, turns only his negatory front-of-brass! The Prince Cardinal de Rohan, Archbishop of Strasburg, first-class Peer of France, of the Blood-royal of Brittany, intimates a wish to see him; he answers: "If Monseigneur the Cardinal is sick, let him come, and I will cure him; if he is well, he has no need of me, I none of him."⁸

Heaven meanwhile has sent him a few disciples: by a nice tact, he knows his man; to one speaks only of Spagiric Medicine, Downfall of Tyranny, and the Egyptian Lodge; to another, of quite high matters, beyond this diurnal sphere, of visits from the Angel of Light, visits from him of Darkness; passing a Statue of Christ, he will pause with a wondrously accented plaintive "Ha!" as of recognition, as of thousand-years remembrance; and when questioned, sink into mysterious silence. *Is* he the Wandering Jew, then? Heaven knows! At Strasburg, in a word, Fortune not only smiles but laughs upon him: as crowning favour, he finds here the richest, in-

⁸ *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel*, ii. 48.

flammablest, most open-handed Dupe ever yet vouchsafed him; no other than that same many-titled Louis de Rohan; strong in whose favour, he can laugh again at Fortune.

Let the curious reader look at him, for an instant or two, through the eyes of two eye-witnesses: the Abbé Georgel, Prince Louis's diplomatic Factotum, and Herr Meiners, the Göttingen Professor:

'Admitted at length,' says our too-prosing Jesuit Abbé, 'to the sanctuary of this *Æsculapius*, Prince Louis saw, according to his own account, in the incommunicative man's physiognomy, something so dignified, so imposing, that he felt penetrated with a religious awe, and reverence dictated his address. Their interview, which was brief, excited more keenly than ever his desire of farther acquaintance. He attained it at length: and the crafty empiric graduated so cunningly his words and procedure, that he gained, without appearing to court it, the Cardinal's entire confidence, and the greatest ascendancy over his will. "Your soul," said he one day to the Prince, "is worthy of mine; you deserve to be made participator of all my secrets." Such an avowal captivated the whole faculties, intellectual and moral, of a man who at all times had hunted after secrets of alchymy and botany. From this moment their union became intimate and public: Cagliostro went and established himself at Saverne, while his Eminency was residing there; their solitary interviews were long and frequent.' * * 'I remember once, having learnt, by a sure way, that Baron de Planta (his Eminency's man of affairs) had frequent, most expensive orgies, in the Archiepiscopal Palace, where Tokay wine ran like water, to regale Cagliostro and his pretended wife, I thought it my duty to inform the Cardinal: his answer was, "I know it; I have even authorised him to commit abuses, if he judge fit."' * * 'He came at last to have no other will than Cagliostro's: and to such a length had it gone, that this sham Egyptian, finding it good to quit Strasburg for a time, and retire into Switzerland, the Cardinal, apprised thereof, despatched his Secretary as well to attend him, as to obtain Predictions from him; such were transmitted in cipher to the Cardinal on every point he needed to consult of.'⁹—

⁹ Georgel, *ubi supra*.

‘Before ever I arrived in Strasburg’ (hear now the as prosing Protestant Professor), ‘I knew almost to a certainty that I should not see Count Cagliostro; at least, not get to speak with him. From many persons I had heard that he, on no account, received visits from curious Travellers, in a state of health; that such as, without being sick, appeared in his audiences were sure to be treated by him, in the brutalest way, as spies.’ * * ‘Nevertheless, though I saw not this new god of Physic near at hand and deliberately, but only for a moment as he rolled on in a rapid carriage, I fancy myself to be better acquainted with him than many that have lived in his society for months.’ ‘My unavoidable conviction is, that Count Cagliostro, from of old, has been more of a cheat than an enthusiast; and also that he continues a cheat to this day.

‘As to his country I have ascertained nothing. Some make him a Spaniard, others a Jew, or an Italian, or a Ragusan; or even an Arab, who had persuaded some Asiatic Prince to send his son to travel in Europe, and then murdered the youth, and taken possession of his treasures. As the self-styled Count speaks badly all the languages you hear from him, and has most likely spent the greater part of his life under feigned names far from home, it is probable enough no sure trace of his origin may ever be discovered.’

‘On his first appearance in Strasburg he connected himself with the Freemasons; but only till he felt strong enough to stand on his own feet: he soon gained the favour of the Prætor and the Cardinal; and through these the favour of the Court, to such a degree that his adversaries cannot so much as think of overthrowing him. With the Prætor and Cardinal he is said to demean himself as with persons who were under boundless obligation to him, to whom he was under none: the equipage of the Cardinal he seems to use as freely as his own. He pretends that he can recognise Atheists or Blasphemers by the smell; that the vapour from such throws him into epileptic fits; into which sacred disorder he, like a true juggler, has the art of falling when he likes. In public he no longer vaunts of rule over spirits, or other magical arts; but I know, even as certainly, that he still pretends to evoke spirits, and by their help and apparition to heal diseases, as I know this other fact, that he understands no more of the human system, or the nature of its diseases, or the use of the commonest therapeutic methods, than any other quack.’

‘According to the crediblest accounts of persons who have long observed him, he is a man to an inconceivable degree choleric (*heftig*), heedless, inconstant; and therefore doubtless it was the happiest idea he ever in his whole life came upon, this of making himself inaccessible; of raising the most obstinate reserve as a bulwark round him; without which precaution he must long ago have been caught at fault.

‘For his own labour he takes neither payment nor present: when presents are made him of such a sort as cannot without offence be refused, he forthwith returns some counter-present, of equal or still higher value. Nay he not only takes nothing from his patients, but frequently admits them, months long, to his house and his table, and will not consent to the smallest recompense. With all this disinterestedness (conspicuous enough, as you may suppose), he lives in an expensive way, plays deep, loses almost constantly to ladies; so that, according to the very lowest estimate, he must require at least 20,000 livres a-year. The darkness which Cagliostro has, on purpose, spread over the sources of his income and outlay, contributes even more than his munificence and miraculous cures to the notion that he is a divine extraordinary man, who has watched Nature in her deepest operations, and among other secrets stolen that of Gold-making from her.’
* * ‘With a mixture of sorrow and indignation over our age, I have to record that this man has found acceptance, not only among the great, who from of old have been the easiest bewitched by such, but also with many of the learned, and even physicians and naturalists.’¹⁰

Halcyon days; only too good to continue! All glory runs its course; has its culmination, and then its often precipitous decline. Eminency Rohan, with fervid temper and small instruction, perhaps of dissolute, certainly of dishonest manners, in whom the faculty of Wonder had attained such prodigious development, was indeed the very stranded whale for jackals to feed on: unhappily, however, no one jackal could long be left in solitary possession of him. A sharper-toothed she-jackal now strikes-in; bites infinitely deeper; stranded whale and he-jackal both are like to become her

¹⁰ Meiners: *Briefe über die Schweiz* (as quoted in *Mirabeau*).

prey. A young French Mantua-maker, 'Countess de La Motte-Valois, descended from Henri II. by the bastard line,' without Extract of Saturn, Egyptian Masonry, or any *verbal* conference with Dark Angels,—has genius enough to get her finger in the Archquack's rich Hermetic Projection, appropriate the golden proceeds, and even finally break the crucible. Prince Cardinal Louis de Rohan is off to Paris, under her guidance, to see the long-invisible Queen, or Queen's *Apparition*; to pick up the Rose in the Garden of Trianon, dropt by her fair sham-royal hand; and then—descend rapidly to the Devil, and drag Cagliostro along with him.

The intelligent reader observes, we have now arrived at that stupendous business of the *Diamond Necklace*: into the dark complexities of which we need not here do more than glance: who knows but, next month, our Historical Chapter, written specially on this subject, may itself see the light? Enough, for the present, if we fancy vividly the poor whale Cardinal, so deep in the adventure that Grand-Cophtic 'predictions transmitted in cipher' will no longer illuminate him; but the Grand Cophta must leave all masonic or other business, happily begun in Naples, Bourdeaux, Lyons, and come personally to Paris with predictions at first hand. 'The 'new Calchas,' says poor Abbé Georgel, 'must have read 'the entrails of his victim ill; for, on issuing from these 'communications with the Angel of Light and of Darkness, 'he prophesied to the Cardinal that this happy correspond- 'ence,' with the Queen's Similitude; 'would place him at the 'highest point of favour; that his influence in the Govern- 'ment would soon become paramount; that he would use it 'for the propagation of good principles, the glory of the 'Supreme Being, and the happiness of Frenchmen.' The new Calchas was indeed at fault: but how could he be otherwise? Let these high Queen's-favours, and all terrestrial

shiftings of the wind, turn as they will, *his* reign, he can well see, is appointed to be temporary; in the mean while, Tokay flows like water; prophecies of good, not of evil, are the method to keep it flowing. Thus if, for Circe de La Motte-Valois, the Egyptian Masonry is but a foolish enchanted cup wherewith to turn her fat Cardinal into a quadruped, she herself converse-wise, for the Grand Cophta, is one who must ever fodder said quadruped with Court hopes, and stall-feed him fatter and fatter,—it is expected, for the knife of *both* parties. They are mutually useful; live in peace, and Tokay festivity, though mutually suspicious, mutually contemptuous. So stand matters through the spring and summer months of the year 1785.

But fancy next that,—while Tokay is flowing within doors, and abroad Egyptian Lodges are getting founded, and gold and glory, from Paris as from other cities, supernaturally coming in,—the latter end of August has arrived, and with it Commissary Chesnon, to lodge the whole unholy Brotherhood, from Cardinal down to Sham-queen, in separate cells of the Bastille! There, for nine long months, let them howl and wail, in bass or in treble; and emit the falsest of false *Mémoires*; among which that *Mémoire pour le Comte de Cagliostro, en présence des autres Co-Accusés*, with its Trebisond Acharats, Scherifs of Mecca, and Nature's unfortunate Child, all gravely printed with French types in the year 1786, may well bear the palm. Fancy that Necklace or Diamonds will nowhere unearth themselves; that the Tuileries Palace sits struck with astonishment and speechless chagrin; that Paris, that all Europe, is ringing with the wonder. That Count Front-of-brass Pinchbeckostom, confronted, at the judgment-bar, with a shrill glib Circe de La Motte, has need of all his eloquence; that nevertheless the Front-of-brass prevails, and exasperated Circe 'throws a

candlestick at him.' Finally, that on the 31st of May 1786, the assembled Parliament of Paris, 'at nine in the evening, after a sitting of eighteen hours,' has solemnly pronounced judgment: and now that Cardinal Louis is gone 'to his estates;' Countess de La Motte is shaven on the head, branded, with red-hot iron, 'V' (*Voleuse*) on both shoulders, and confined for life to the Salpêtrière; her Count wandering uncertain, with diamonds for sale, over the British Empire; that the Sieur de Villette, for handling a queen's pen, is banished forever; the too-queenlike Demoiselle Gay d'Oliva (with her unfathered infant) 'put out of Court;'—and Grand Cophta Cagliostro liberated indeed, but pillaged, and ordered forthwith to take himself away. His disciples illuminate their windows; but what does that avail? Commissary Chesnon, Bastille-Governor De Launay cannot recollect the least particular of those priceless effects, those gold-rouleaus, repeating watches of his: he must even retire to Passy that very night; and two days afterwards, sees nothing for it but Boulogne and England. Thus does the miserable pickleherring tragedy of the Diamond Necklace wind itself up, and wind Cagliostro once more to inhospitable shores.

Arrived here, and lodged tolerably in 'Sloane Street, Knightsbridge,' by the aid of a certain Mr. Swinton, whilom broken Wine-merchant, now Apothecary, to whom he carries introductions, he can drive a small trade in Egyptian pills, such as one 'sells in *Paris* at thirty-shillings the dram;' in unctuously discoursing to Egyptian Lodges; in 'giving public audiences as at Strasburg,'—if so be any one will bite. At all events, he can, by the aid of amanuensis-disciples, compose and publish his *Lettre au Peuple Anglais*; setting forth his unheard-of generosities, unheard-of injustices suffered, in a world not worthy of him, at the hands of English

Lawyers, Bastille-Governors, French Counts, and others; his *Lettre aux Français*, singing to the same tune, predicting too, what many inspired Editors had already boded, that 'the Bastille would be destroyed,' and 'a King would come who should govern by States-General.' But, alas, the shafts of Criticism are busy with him; so many hostile eyes look towards him: the world, in short, is getting too hot for him. Mark, nevertheless, how the brow of brass quails not; nay a touch of his old poetic Humour, even in this sad crisis, unexpectedly unfolds itself.

One De Morande, Editor of a *Courrier de l'Europe* published here at that period, has for some time made it his distinction to be the foremost of Cagliostro's enemies. Cagliostro, enduring much in silence, happens once, in some 'public audience,' to mention a practice he had witnessed in Arabia the Stony: the people there, it seems, are in the habit of fattening a few pigs annually, on provender mixed with arsenic, whereby the whole pig-carcass by and by becomes, so to speak, arsenical; the arsenical pigs are then let loose into the woods; eaten by lions, leopards and other ferocious creatures; which latter naturally all die in consequence, and so the woods are cleared of them. This adroit practice the Sieur Morande thought a proper subject for banter; and accordingly, in his Seventeenth and two following Numbers, made merry enough with it. Whereupon Count Front-of-brass, whose patience has limits, writes as Advertisement (still to be read in old files of the *Public Advertiser*, under date September 3, 1786), a French Letter, not without causticity and aristocratic disdain; challenging the witty Sieur to breakfast with him, for the 9th of November next, in the face of the world, on an actual Sucking Pig, fattened by Cagliostro, but cooked, carved and selected from by the Sieur Morande,—under bet of Five Thousand Guineas sterling that, next morning there-

after, he the *Sieur Morande* shall be dead, and *Count Cagliostro* be alive! The poor *Sieur* durst not cry, Done; and backed-out of the transaction, making wry faces. Thus does a kind of red coppery splendour encircle our *Archquack's* decline; thus with brow of brass, grim smiling, does he meet his destiny.

But suppose we should now, from these foreign scenes turn homewards, for a moment, into the native alley in *Palermo*! *Palermo*, with its dinginess, its mud or dust, the old black *Balsamo House*, the very beds and chairs, all are still standing there; and *Beppo* has altered so strangely, has wandered so far away. Let us look; for happily we have the fairest opportunity.

In April 1787, *Palermo* contained a Traveller of a thousand; no other than the great *Goethe* from *Weimar*. At his *Table-d'hôte* he heard much of *Cagliostro*; at length also of a certain *Palermo Lawyer*, who had been engaged by the French Government to draw up an authentic genealogy and memoir of him. This Lawyer, and even the rude draft of his Memoir, he with little difficulty gets to see; inquires next whether it were not possible to see the actual *Balsamo Family*, whereof it appears the mother and a widowed sister still survive. For this matter, however, the Lawyer can do nothing; only refer him to his Clerk; who again starts difficulties: To get at those genealogic Documents he has been obliged to invent some story of a Government-Pension being in the wind for those poor *Balsamos*; and now that the whole matter is finished, and the Paper sent off to France, has nothing so much at heart as to keep out of their way:

'So said the Clerk. However, as I could not abandon my purpose, we after some study concerted that I should give myself out for an Englishman, and bring the family news of *Cagliostro*, who had lately got out of the *Bastille*, and gone to London.

‘At the appointed hour, it might be three in the afternoon, we set forth. The house lay in the corner of an Alley, not far from the main-street named *Il Casaró*. We ascended a miserable staircase, and came straight into the kitchen. A woman of middle stature, broad and stout, yet not corpulent, stood busy washing the kitchen-dishes. She was decently dressed; and, on our entrance, turned-up the one end of her apron, to hide the soiled side from us. She joyfully recognised my conductor, and said: “Signor Giovanni, do you bring us good news? Have you made out anything?”

‘He answered: “In our affair, nothing yet; but here is a Stranger that brings a salutation from your Brother, and can tell you how he is at present.”

‘The salutation I was to bring stood not in our agreement: meanwhile, one way or other, the introduction was accomplished. “You know my Brother?” inquired she.—“All Europe knows him,” answered I; “and I fancied it would gratify you to hear that he is now in safety and well; as, of late, no doubt you have been anxious about him.”—“Step in,” said she; “I will follow you directly;” and with the Clerk I entered the room.

‘It was large and high; and might, with us, have passed for a saloon; it seemed, indeed, to be almost the sole lodging of the family. A single window lighted the large walls, which had once had colour; and on which were black pictures of saints, in gilt frames, hanging round. Two large beds, without curtains, stood at one wall; a brown press, in the form of a writing-desk, at the other. Old rush-bottomed chairs, the backs of which had once been gilt, stood by; and the tiles of the floor were in many places worn deep into hollows. For the rest, all was cleanly; and we approached the family, which sat assembled at the one window, in the other end of the apartment.

‘Whilst my guide was explaining, to the old Widow Balsamo, the purpose of our visit, and by reason of her deafness had to repeat his words several times aloud, I had time to observe the chamber and the other persons in it. A girl of about sixteen, well formed, whose features had become uncertain by small-pox, stood at the window; beside her a young man, whose disagreeable look, deformed by the same disease, also struck me. In an easy-chair, right before the window, sat or rather lay a sick, much disshapen person, who appeared to labour under a sort of lethargy.

‘My guide having made himself understood, we were invited to take seats. The old woman put some questions to me ; which, however, I had to get interpreted before I could answer them, the Sicilian dialect not being quite at my command.

‘Meanwhile I looked at the aged widow with satisfaction. She was of middle stature, but well shaped ; over her regular features, which age had not deformed, lay that sort of peace usual with people that have lost their hearing ; the tone of her voice was soft and agreeable.

‘I answered her questions ; and my answers also had again to be interpreted for her.

‘The slowness of our conversation gave me leisure to measure my words. I told her that her son had been acquitted in France, and was at present in England, where he met with good reception. Her joy, which she testified at these tidings, was mixed with expressions of a heartfelt piety ; and as she now spoke a little louder and slower, I could the better understand her.

‘In the mean time, the daughter had entered ; and taken her seat beside my conductor, who repeated to her faithfully what I had been narrating. She had put-on a clean apron ; had set her hair in order under the net-cap. The more I looked at her, and compared her with her mother, the more striking became the difference of the two figures. A vivacious, healthy Sensualism (*Sinnlichkeit*) beamed forth from the whole structure of the daughter : she might be a woman of about forty. With brisk blue eyes, she looked sharply round ; yet in her look I could trace no suspicion. When she sat, her figure promised more height than it showed when she rose : her posture was determinate, she sat with her body leaned forwards, the hands resting on the knees. For the rest, her physiognomy, more of the snubby than the sharp sort, reminded me of her Brother’s Portrait, familiar to us in engravings. She asked me several things about my journey, my purpose to see Sicily ; and was sure I would come back, and celebrate the Feast of Saint Rosalia with them.

‘As the grandmother, meanwhile, had again put some questions to me, and I was busy answering her, the daughter kept speaking to my companion half-aloud, yet so that I could take occasion to ask what it was. He answered : Signora Capitummino was telling him that her Brother owed her fourteen gold Ounces ; on his sudden de-

parture from Palermo, she had redeemed several things for him that were in pawn ; but never since that day had either heard from him, or got money or any other help, though it was said he had great riches, and made a princely outlay. Now would not I perhaps undertake on my return, to remind him, in a handsome way, of the debt, and procure some assistance for her ; nay would I not carry a Letter with me, or at all events get it carried ? I offered to do so. She asked where I lodged, whither she must send the Letter to me ? I avoided naming my abode, and offered to call next day towards night, and receive the Letter myself.

‘ She thereupon described to me her untoward situation : how she was a widow with three children, of whom the one girl was getting educated in a convent, the other was here present, and her son just gone out to his lesson. How, beside these three children, she had her mother to maintain ; and moreover out of Christian love had taken the unhappy sick person there to her house, whereby the burden was heavier : how all her industry would scarcely suffice to get necessaries for herself and hers. She knew indeed that God did not leave good works unrewarded ; yet must sigh very sore under the load she had long borne.

‘ The young people mixed in the dialogue, and our conversation grew livelier. While speaking with the others, I could hear the good old widow ask her daughter : If I belonged, then, to their holy Religion ? I remarked also that the daughter strove, in a prudent way, to avoid an answer ; signifying to her mother, so far as I could take it up : That the Stranger seemed to have a kind feeling towards them ; and that it was not well-bred to question any one straightway on that point.

‘ As they heard that I was soon to leave Palermo, they became more pressing, and importuned me to come back ; especially vaunting the paradisaic days of the Rosalia Festival, the like of which was not to be seen and tasted in all the world.

‘ My attendant, who had long been anxious to get off, at last put an end to the interview by his gestures ; and I promised to return on the morrow evening, and take the Letter. My attendant expressed his joy that all had gone off so well, and we parted mutually content.

‘ You may fancy the impression this poor and pious, well-dispositioned family had made on me. My curiosity was satisfied ; but

their natural and worthy bearing had raised an interest in me, which reflection did but increase.

‘Forthwith, however, there arose for me anxieties about the following day. It was natural that this appearance of mine, which, at the first moment, had taken them by surprise, should, after my departure, awaken many reflections. By the Genealogy I knew that several others of the family were in life: it was natural that they should call their friends together, and in the presence of all, get those things repeated which, the day before, they had heard from me with admiration. My object was attained; there remained nothing more than, in some good fashion, to end the adventure. I accordingly repaired next day, directly after dinner, alone to their house. They expressed surprise as I entered. The Letter was not ready yet, they said; and some of their relations wished to make my acquaintance, who towards night would be there.

‘I answered, that having to set off tomorrow morning, and visits still to pay, and ‘packing to transact, I had thought it better to come early than not at all.

‘Meanwhile the son entered, whom yesterday I had not seen. He resembled his sister in size and figure. He brought the Letter they were to give me; he had, as is common in those parts, got it written out of doors, by one of their Notaries that sit publicly to do such things. The young man had a still, melancholy and modest aspect; inquired after his Uncle, asked about his riches and outlays, and added sorrowfully, Why had he so forgotten his kindred? “It were our greatest fortune,” continued he, “should he once return hither, and take notice of us: but,” continued he, “how came he to let you know that he had relatives in Palermo? It is said, he everywhere denies us, and gives himself out for a man of great birth.” I answered this question, which had now arisen by the imprudence of my Guide at our first entrance, in such sort as to make it seem that the Uncle, though he might have reasons for concealing his birth from the public, did yet, towards his friends and acquaintance, keep it no secret.

‘The sister, who had come up during this dialogue, and by the presence of her brother, perhaps also by the absence of her yesterday’s friend, had got more courage, began also to speak with much grace and liveliness. They begged me earnestly to recommend them to their Uncle, if I wrote to him; and not less earnestly, when once I

should have made this journey through the Island, to come back and pass the Rosalia Festival with them.

‘The mother spoke in accordance with her children. “Sir,” said she, “though it is not seemly, as I have a grown daughter, to see stranger gentlemen in my house, and one has cause to guard against both danger and evil-speaking, yet shall you ever be welcome to us, when you return to this city.”

“O yes,” answered the young ones, “we will lead the Gentleman all round the Festival; we will show him everything, get a place on the scaffolds, where the grand sights are seen best. What will he say to the great Chariot, and more than all, to the glorious Illumination!”

‘Meanwhile the Grandmother had read the Letter and again read it. Hearing that I was about to take leave, she arose, and gave me the folded sheet. “Tell my son,” began she with a noble vivacity, nay with a sort of inspiration, “Tell my son how happy the news have made me, which you brought from him! Tell him that I clasp him to my heart”—here she stretched out her arms asunder, and pressed them again together on her breast—“that I daily beseech God and our Holy Virgin for him in prayer; that I give him and his wife my blessing; and that I wish before my end to see him again with these eyes, which have shed so many tears for him.”

‘The peculiar grace of the Italian tongue favoured the choice and noble arrangement of these words, which moreover were accompanied with lively gestures, wherewith that nation can add such a charm to spoken words.

‘I took my leave, not without emotion. They all gave me their hands; the children showed me out; and as I went down stairs, they jumped to the balcony of the kitchen-window, which projected over the street; called after me, threw me salutes, and repeated, that I must in no wise forget to come back. I saw them still on the balcony, when I turned the corner.”¹¹

Poor old Felicità, and must thy pious prayers, thy motherly blessings, and so many tears shed by those old eyes, be all in vain! To thyself, in any case, they were

¹¹ Goethe's *Werke* (*Italiänische Reise*), xxviii. 146.

blessed.—As for the Signora Capitummino, with her three fatherless children, shall we not hope at least, that the fourteen gold Ounces were paid, by a sure hand, and so her heavy burden, for some space, lightened a little? Alas, no, it would seem; owing to accidents, not even that!¹²

Count Cagliostro, all this while, is rapidly proceeding with his Fifth Act; the red coppery splendour darkens more and more into final gloom. Some boiling muddleheads of a dupeable sort there still are in England: Popish-Riot Lord George, for instance, will walk with him to Count Barthélemy's or D'Adhémar's; and, in bad French and worse rhetoric, abuse the Queen of France: but what does it profit? Lord George must one day (after noise enough) revisit Newgate for it; and in the mean while, hard words pay no scores. Apothecary Swinton begins to get wearisome; French spies look ominously in; Egyptian Pills are slack of sale; the old vulturous Attorney-host anew scents carrion, is bestirring itself anew: Count Cagliostro, in the May of 1787, must once more leave England. But whither? Ah, whither! At Bâle, at Bienne, over Switzerland, the game is up. At Aix in Savoy, there are baths, but no gudgeons in them: at Turin, his Majesty of Sardinia meets you with an order to begone on the instant. A like fate from the Emperor Joseph at Roveredo;—before the *Liber memorialis de Caleostro dum esset Roboretti* could extend to many pages! Count Front-of-brass begins confessing himself to priests: yet 'at Trent paints a new hieroglyphic Screen,'—touching last flicker of a light that once burnt so high! He pawns diamond buckles; wanders necessitous hither and thither; repents, unrepents; knows not what to do. For Destiny has her nets round him; they are straitening, straitening; too soon he will be *ginned!*

¹² Goethe's *Werke* (*Italiänische Reise*), xxviii. 146.

Driven out from Trent, what shall he make of the new hieroglyphic Screen, what of himself? The wayworn Grand-Cophless has begun to blab family secrets; she longs to be in Rome, by her mother's hearth, by her mother's grave; in any nook, where so much as the shadow of refuge waits her. To the desperate Count Front-of-brass all places are nearly alike: urged by female babble, he will go to Rome, then; why not? On a May-day, of the year 1789 (when such glorious work had just begun in France, to him all forbidden!), he enters the Eternal City; it was his doom-summons that called him thither. On the 29th of next December, the Holy Inquisition, long watchful enough, detects him founding some feeble moneyless ghost of an Egyptian Lodge; 'picks him off,' as the military say, and locks him hard and fast in the Castle of St. Angelo:

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate!

Count Cagliostro did not lose all hope: nevertheless a few words will now suffice for him. In vain, with his mouth of pinchbeck and his front of brass, does he heap chimera on chimera; demand religious Books (which are freely given him); demand clean Linen, and an interview with his Wife (which are refused him); assert now that the Egyptian Masonry is a divine system, accommodated to erring and gullible men, which the Holy Father, when he knows it, will patronise; anon that there are some four millions of Freemasons, spread over Europe, all sworn to exterminate Priest and King, wherever met with: in vain! they will not acquit him, as misunderstood Theophilanthropist; will not emit him, in Pope's pay, as renegade Masonic Spy: 'he can't get out.' Donna Lorenza languishes, invisible to him, in a neighbouring cell; begins at length to *confess!* Whereupon he too, in torrents, will emit confessions and forestall her: these the

Inquisition pocket and sift (whence this *Life of Balsamo*); but will not let him out. In fine, after some eighteen months of the weariest hounding, doubling, worrying, and standing at bay, His Holiness gives sentence: The Manuscript of Egyptian Masonry is to be burnt by hand of the common Hangman, and all that intermeddle with such Masonry are accursed; Giuseppe Balsamo, justly forfeited of life for being a Freemason, shall nevertheless in mercy be forgiven; instructed in the duties of penitence, and even kept safe thenceforth and till death,—in ward of Holy Church. Ill-starred Acharat, must it so end with thee? This was in April 1791.

He addressed (how vainly!) an appeal to the French Constituent Assembly. As was said, in Heaven, in Earth, or in Hell there was no Assembly that could well take his part. For four years more, spent one knows not how,—most probably in the furor of edacity, with insufficient cookery, and the stupor of indigestion,—the curtain lazily falls. There rotted and gave way the cordage of a tough heart. One summer morning of the year 1795, the Body of Cagliostro is still found in the prison of St. Leo; but Cagliostro's Self has escaped,—*whither* no man yet knows. The brow of brass, behold how it has got all unlacquered; these pinckbeck lips can lie no more: Cagliostro's work is ended, and now only his *account* to present. As the Scherif of Mecca said, "Nature's unfortunate child, adieu!"

Such, according to our comprehension thereof, is the rise, progress, grandeur and decadence of the Quack of Quacks. Does the reader ask, What good was in it; Why occupy his time and hours with the biography of such a miscreant? We answer, It was stated on the very threshold of this matter, in the loftiest terms, by Herr Sauerteig, that the

Lives of all Eminent Persons, miscreant or creant, ought to be written. Thus has not the very Devil his *Life*, deservedly written not by Daniel Defoe only, but by quite other hands than Daniel's? For the rest, the Thing represented on these pages is no Sham, but a Reality; thou hast it, O reader, as we have it: Nature was pleased to produce even such a man, even so, not otherwise; and the Editor of this Magazine is here mainly to record, in an adequate manner, what *she*, of her thousandfold mysterious richness and greatness, produces.

But the moral lesson? Where is the moral lesson? Foolish reader, in every Reality, nay in every genuine Shadow of a Reality (what we call Poem), there lie a hundred such, or a million such, according as thou hast the *eye* to read them! Of which hundred or million lying *here* in the present Reality, couldst not thou, for example, be advised to take this one, to thee worth all the rest: "Behold, 'I too have attained that immeasurable, mysterious glory of 'being *alive*; to me also a Capability has been intrusted; 'shall I strive to work it out, manlike, into Faithfulness, and 'Doing; or, quacklike, into Eatableness, and Similitude of 'Doing? Or why not rather, gigman-like, and following the "'respectable' countless multitude,—into *both*?" The decision is of quite *infinite* moment; see thou make it aright.

But in fine, look at this matter of Cagliostro, as at all matters, with thy heart, with thy whole mind; no longer merely squint at it with the poor side-glance of thy calculative faculty. Look at it not *logically* only, but *mystically*. Thou shalt in sober truth see it (as Sauerteig asserted) to be a Pasquillant verse, of most inspired writing in its kind, in that same 'Grand Bible of Universal History;' wondrously and even indispensably connected with the Heroic portions that stand there; even as the all-showing Light is with

the Darkness wherein nothing can be seen ; as the hideous taloned *roots* are with the fair *boughs*, and their leaves and flowers and fruit ; both of which, and not one of which, make the Tree. Think also whether thou hast known no Public Quacks, on far higher scale than this, whom a Castle of St. Angelo never could get hold of ; and how, as Emperors, Chancellors (having found much fitter machinery), they could run their Quack-career ; and make whole kingdoms, whole continents, into one huge Egyptian Lodge, and squeeze supplies of money or of blood from it at discretion ? Also, whether thou even now knowest not Private Quacks, innumerable as the sea-sands, toiling as mere *Half-Cagliostros* ; imperfect, hybrid-quacks, of whom Cagliostro is as the unattainable ideal and type-specimen ? Such is the world. Understand it, despise it, love it ; cheerfully hold on thy way through it, with thy eye on higher load-stars !

DEATH OF EDWARD IRVING.

DEATH OF EDWARD IRVING.¹

[1835.]

EDWARD IRVING'S warfare has closed ; if not in victory, yet in invincibility, and faithful endurance to the end. The Spirit of the Time, which could not enlist him as its soldier, must needs, in all ways, fight against him as its enemy : it has done its part, and he has done his. One of the noblest natures ; a man of antique heroic nature, in questionable modern garniture, which he could not wear ! Around him a distracted society, vacant, prurient ; heat and darkness, and what these two may breed : mad extremes of flattery, followed by madder contumely, by indifference and neglect ! These were the conflicting elements ; this is the result they have made out among them. The voice of our 'son of thunder,'—with its deep tone of wisdom that belonged to all articulate-speaking ages, never inaudible amid wildest dissonances that belong to this inarticulate age, which slumbers and somnambulates, which cannot *speak*, but only screech and gibber,—has gone silent so soon. Closed are those lips. The large heart, with its large bounty, where wretchedness found solacement, and they that were wandering in darkness the light as of a home, has paused. The strong man can no more : beaten-on from without, undermined from

¹ FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 61.

within, he has had to sink overwearied, as at nightfall, when it was yet but the mid-season of day. Irving was forty-two years and some months old: Scotland sent him forth a Herculean man; our mad Babylon wore him and wasted him, with all her engines; and it took her twelve years. He sleeps with his fathers, in that loved birth-land: Babylon with its deafening inanity rages on; but to him henceforth innocuous, unheeded—forever.

Reader, thou hast seen and heard the man, as who has not,—with wise or unwise wonder; thou shalt not see or hear him again. The work, be what it might, is *done*; dark curtains sink over it, enclose it ever deeper into the unchangeable Past. Think, for perhaps thou art one of a thousand, and worthy so to think, That here once more was a gennine man sent into this our *ungenuine* phantasmagory of a world, which would go to ruin without such; that here once more, under thy own eyes, in this last decade, was enacted the old Tragedy, and has had its fifth-act now, of *The Messenger of Truth in the Age of Shams*,—and what relation thou thyself mayest have to that. Whether any? Beyond question, thou thyself art *here*; either a dreamer or awake; and one day shalt cease to dream.

This man was appointed a Christian Priest; and strove with the whole force that was in him to *be* it. To be it: in a time of Tithe Controversy, Encyclopedism, Catholic Rent, Philanthropism, and the Revolution of Three Days! He might have been so many things; not a speaker only, but a doer; the leader of hosts of men. For his head, when the Fog-Babylon had not yet obscured it, was of strong far-searching insight; his very enthusiasm was sanguine, not atrabiliar; he was so loving, full of hope, so simple-hearted, and made all that approached him his. A giant

force of activity was in the man ; speculation was accident, not nature. Chivalry, adventurous field-life of the old Border, and a far nobler sort than that, ran in his blood. There was in him a courage, dauntless not pugnacious, hardly fierce, by no possibility ferocious ; as of the generous war-horse, gentle in its strength, yet that laughs at the shaking of the spear.—But, above all, be what he might, to be a *reality* was indispensable for him. In his simple Scottish circle, the highest form of manhood attainable or known was that of Christian ; the highest Christian was the Teacher of such. Irving's lot was cast. For the foray-spears were all rusted into earth there ; Annan Castle had become a Townhall ; and Prophetic Knox had sent tidings thither : Prophetic Knox ; and, alas, also Sceptic Hume ; and, as the natural consequence, Diplomatic Dundas ! In such mixed incongruous element had the young soul to grow.

Grow, nevertheless, he did, with that strong vitality of his ; grow and ripen. What the Scottish uncelebrated Irving was, they that have only seen the London celebrated and distorted one can never know. Bodily and spiritually, perhaps there was not, in that November 1822, when he first arrived here, a man more full of genial energetic life in all these Islands.

By a fatal chance, Fashion cast her eye on him, as on some impersonation of Novel-Cameronianism, some wild Product of Nature from the wild mountains ; Fashion crowded round him, with her meteor lights and Bacchic dances ; breathed her foul incense on him ; intoxicating, poisoning. One may say, it was his own nobleness that forwarded such ruin ; the excess of his sociability and sympathy, of his value for the suffrages and sympathies of men. Siren songs, as of a new Moral Reformation (sons of Mammon, and high sons of Belial and Beelzebub, to become sons of God, and

the gumflowers of Almack's to be made living roses in a new Eden), sound in the inexperienced ear and heart. Most seductive, most delusive! Fashion went her idle way, to gaze on Egyptian Crocodiles, Iroquois Hunters, or what else there might be; forgot this man,—who unhappily could not in his turn forget. The intoxicating poison had been swallowed; no force of natural health could cast it out. Unconsciously, for most part in deep unconsciousness, there was now the impossibility to live neglected; to walk on the quiet paths, where alone it is well with us. Singularity must henceforth succeed Singularity. O foulest Circean draught, thou poison of Popular Applause! madness is in thee, and death; thy end is Bedlam and the Grave. For the last seven years, Irving, forsaken by the world, strove either to recall it, or to forsake it; shut himself up in a lesser world of ideas and persons, and lived isolated there. Neither in this was there health: for this man such isolation was not fit, such ideas, such persons.

One light still shone on him; alas, through a medium more and more turbid: the light from Heaven. His Bible was there, wherein must lie healing for all sorrows. To the Bible he more and more exclusively addressed himself. If it is the written Word of God, shall it not be the acted Word too? Is it mere sound, then; black printer's-ink on white rag-paper? A half-man could have passed on without answering; a whole man must answer. Hence Prophecies of Millenniums, Gifts of Tongues,—whereat Orthodoxy prims herself into decent wonder, and waves her, Avaunt! Irving clave to his Belief, as to his soul's soul; followed it whithersoever, through earth or air, it might lead him; toiling as never man toiled to spread it, to gain the world's ear for it,—in vain. Ever wilder waxed the confusion without and within. The misguided noble-minded had now nothing

left to do but die. He died the death of the true and brave. His last words, they say, were: "In life and in death I am the Lord's."—Amen! Amen!

One who knew him well, and may with good cause love him, has said: "But for Irving, I had never known what the communion of man with man means. His was the freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul mine ever came in contact with: I call him, on the whole, the best man I have ever, after trial enough, found in this world, or now hope to find.

"The first time I saw Irving was six-and-twenty years ago, in his native town, Annan. He was fresh from Edinburgh, with College prizes, high character and promise; he had come to see our Schoolmaster, who had also been his. We heard of famed Professors, of high matters classical, mathematical, a whole Wonderland of Knowledge: nothing but joy, health, hopefulness without end, looked out from the blooming young man. The last time I saw him was three months ago, in London. Friendliness still beamed in his eyes, but now from amid unquiet fire; his face was flaccid, wasted, unsound; hoary as with extreme age: he was trembling over the brink of the grave.—Adieu, thou first Friend; adieu, while this confused Twilight of Existence lasts! Might we meet where Twilight has become Day!"

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

THE TALE.¹

BY GOETHE.

[1832.]

THAT Goethe, many years ago, wrote a piece named *Das Märchen* (The Tale); which the admiring critics of Germany contrived to criticise by a stroke of the pen; declaring that it was indeed *The Tale*, and worthy to be called the Tale of Tales (*das Märchen aller Märchen*),—may appear certain to most English readers, for they have repeatedly seen as much in print. To some English readers it may appear certain, furthermore, that they personally know this Tale of Tales; and can even pronounce it to deserve no such epithet, and the admiring critics of Germany to be little other than blockheads.

English readers! the first certainty is altogether indubitable; the second certainty is not worth a rush.

That same *Märchen aller Märchen* you may see with your own eyes, at this hour, in the Fifteenth Volume of *Goethes Werke*; and seeing is believing. On the other hand, that English ‘Tale of Tales,’ put forth some years ago as the Translation thereof, by an individual connected with the Periodical Press of London (his Periodical vehicle, if we remember, broke down soon after, and was rebuilt, and still runs, under the name of *Court Journal*),—was a Translation, miserable enough, of a quite different thing; a thing, not a *Märchen* (Fabulous Tale) at all, but an *Erzählung* or common fictitious Narrative; having no manner of relation to the real piece (beyond standing in the same Volume); not so much as Milton’s *Tetrachordon* of Divorce has to his *Allegro* and *Penseroso*! In this way do individuals con-

¹ FRASER’S MAGAZINE, No. 33.

nected with the Periodical Press of London play their part, and commodiously befooled thee, O Public of English readers, and can serve thee with a mass of roasted grass, and name it stewed venison; and will continue to do so, till thou—open thy eyes, and from a blind monster become a seeing one.

This mistake we did not publicly note at the time of its occurrence; for two good reasons: first, that while mistakes are increasing, like Population, at the rate of Twelve Hundred a-day, the benefit of seizing *one*, and throttling it, would be perfectly inconsiderable: second, that we were not then in existence. The highly composite astonishing Entity, which here as ‘O. Y.’ addresses mankind for a season, still slumbered (his elements scattered over Infinitude, and working under other shapes) in the womb of Nothing! Meditate on us a little, O reader: if thou wilt consider who and what we are; what Powers, of Cash, Esurience, Intelligence, Stupidity and Mystery created us, and what work we do and will do, there shall be no end to thy amazement.

This mistake, however, we do now note; induced thereto by occasion. By the fact, namely, that a genuine English Translation of that *Mährchen* has been handed-in to us for judgment; and now (such judgment having proved merciful) comes out from us in the way of publication. Of the Translation we cannot say much; by the colour of the paper, it may be some seven years old, and have lain perhaps in smoky repositories: it is not a good Translation; yet also not wholly bad; faithful to the original (as we can vouch, after strict trial); conveys the real meaning, though with an effort: here and there our pen has striven to help it, but could not do much. The poor Translator, who signs himself ‘D. T.,’ and affects to carry matters with a high hand, though, as we have ground to surmise, he is probably in straits for the necessaries of life,—has, at a more recent date, appended numerous Notes; wherein he will convince himself that more meaning lies in his *Mährchen* ‘than in all the Literature of our century:’ some of these we have retained, now and then with an explanatory or exculpatory word of our own; the most we have cut away, as superfluous and even absurd. Superfluous and even absurd, we say: D. T. can take this of us as he likes; we know him, and what is in him, and what is not in him; believe that he will prove reasonable; can do either way. At all events, let one of the notablest Performances pro-

duced for the last thousand years be now, through his organs (since no other, in this elapsed half-century, have offered themselves), set before an undiscerning public.

We too will premise our conviction that this *Mährchen* presents a phantasmagoric Adumbration, pregnant with deepest significance ; though nowise that D. T. has so accurately evolved the same. Listen notwithstanding to a remark or two, extracted from his immeasurable Proem :

‘Dull men of this country,’ says he, ‘who pretend to admire Goethe, smiled on me when I first asked the meaning of this Tale. “Meaning !” answered they : “it is a wild arabesque, without meaning or purpose at all, except to dash together, copiously enough, confused hues of Imagination, and see what will come of them.” Such is still the persuasion of several heads ; which nevertheless would perhaps grudge to be considered wigblocks.’—Not impossible : the first Sin in our Universe was Lucifer’s, that of Self-conceit. But hear again ; what is more to the point :

‘The difficulties of interpretation are exceedingly enhanced by one circumstance, not unusual in other such writings of Goethe’s ; namely, that this is no Allegory ; which, as in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, you have only once for all to find the key of, and so go on unlocking : it is a Phantasmagory, rather ; wherein things the most heterogeneous are, with homogeneity of figure, emblemed forth ; which would require not one key to unlock it, but, at different stages of the business, a dozen successive keys. Here you have Epochs of Time shadowed forth, there Qualities of the Human Soul ; now it is Institutions, Historical Events, now Doctrines, Philosophic Truths : thus are all manner of “entities and quiddities and ghosts of defunct bodies” set flying ; you have the whole Four Elements chaotico-creatively jumbled together, and spirits enough embodying themselves, and roguishly peering through, in the confused wild-working mass ! * * *

‘So much, however, I will stake my whole money-capital and literary character upon : that here is a wonderful EMBLEM OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY set forth ; more especially a wonderful Emblem of this our wonderful and woful “Age of Transition ;” what men have been and done, what they are to be and do, is, in this Tale of Tales, poetico-prophetically typified, in such a style of grandeur and celestial brilli-

‘ancy and life, as the Western Imagination has not elsewhere reached ;
 ‘as only the Oriental Imagination, and in the primeval ages, was wont
 ‘to attempt.’—Here surely is good wine, with a big bush ! Study the
 Tale of Tales, O reader : even in the bald version of D. T., there will
 be meaning found. He continues in this triumphant style :

‘Can any mortal head (not a wigblock) doubt that the Giant of
 ‘this Poem means SUPERSTITION ? That the Ferryman has something
 ‘to do with the PRIESTHOOD ; his Hut with the CHURCH ?

‘Again, might it not be presumed that the River were TIME ; and
 ‘that it flowed (as Time does) between two worlds ? Call the world,
 ‘or country on this side, where the fair Lily dwells, the world of
 ‘SUPERNATURALISM ; the country on that side, NATURALISM, the work-
 ‘ing week-day world where we all dwell and toil : whosoever or what-
 ‘soever introduces itself, and appears, in the firm-earth of human
 ‘business, or as we well say, *comes into* Existence, must proceed *from*
 ‘Lily’s supernatural country ; whatsoever of a material sort deceases
 ‘and disappears might be expected to go *thither*. Let the reader con-
 ‘sider this, and note what comes of it.

‘To get a free solid communication established over this same won-
 ‘drous River of Time, so that the Natural and Supernatural may stand
 ‘in friendliest neighbourhood and union, forms the grand action of
 ‘this Phantasmagoric Poem : is not such also, let me ask thee, the
 ‘grand action and summary of Universal History ; the one problem
 ‘of Human Culture ; the thing which Mankind (once the three daily
 ‘meals of victual were moderately secured) has ever striven after, and
 ‘must ever strive after?—Alas ! we observe very soon, matters stand on
 ‘a most distressful footing, in this of Natural and Supernatural : there
 ‘are three conveyances across, and all bad, all incidental, temporary,
 ‘uncertain : the worst of the three, one would think, and the worst
 ‘conceivable, were the Giant’s Shadow, at sunrise and sunset ; the
 ‘best that Snake-bridge at noon, yet still only a bad-best. Consider
 ‘again our trustless, rotten, revolutionary “age of transition,” and see
 ‘whether this too does not fit it !

‘If you ask next, Who these other strange characters are, the
 ‘Snake, the Will-o’-wisps, the Man with the Lamp ? I will answer,
 ‘in general and afar off, that *Light* must signify human Insight, Cul-
 ‘tivation, in one sort or other. As for the Snake, I know not well
 ‘what name to call it by ; nay perhaps, in our scanty vocabularies,

‘there is no *name* for it, though that does not hinder its being a thing, genuine enough. Meditation ; Intellectual Research ; Understanding ; in the most general acceptation, Thought : all these come near designating it ; none actually designates it. Were I bound, under legal penalties, to give the creature a name, I should say, *THOUGHT* rather than another.

‘But what if our Snake, and so much else that works here beside it, were neither a *quality*, nor a *reality*, nor a *state*, nor an *action*, in any kind ; none of these things purely and alone, but something intermediate and partaking of them all ! In which case, to *name* it, in vulgar speech, were a still more frantic attempt : it is unnameable in speech ; and remains only the allegorical Figure known in this Tale by the name of Snake, and more or less *resembling* and shadowing-forth somewhat that speech has named, or might name. It is this heterogeneity of nature, pitching your solidest Predicables heels-over-head, throwing you half-a-dozen Categories into the melting-pot at once,—that so unspeakably bewilders a Commentator, and for moments is nigh reducing him to *delirium saltans*.

‘The Will-o’-wisps, that laugh and jig, and compliment the ladies, and eat gold and shake it from them, I for my own share take the liberty of viewing as some shadow of ELEGANT CULTURE, or modern Fine Literature ; which by and by became so sceptical-destructive ; and did, as French Philosophy, eat Gold (or Wisdom) enough, and shake it out again. In which sense, their coming (into Existence) by the old Ferryman’s (by the Priesthood’s) assistance, and almost over-setting his boat, and then laughing at him, and trying to skip-off from him, yet being obliged to stop till they had satisfied him : all this, to the discerning eye, has its significance.

‘As to the Man with the Lamp, in him and his gold-giving, jewel-forming and otherwise so miraculous Light, which “casts no shadow,” and “cannot illuminate what is wholly otherwise in darkness,”—I see what you might name the celestial REASON of Man (Reason as contrasted with Understanding, and superordinated to it), the purest essence of his seeing Faculty ; which manifests itself as the Spirit of Poetry, of Prophecy, or whatever else of highest in the intellectual sort man’s mind can do. We behold this respectable, venerable Lamp-bearer everywhere present in time of need ; directing, accomplishing, working, wonder-working, finally victorious ;—as, in strict

‘ reality, it is ever (if we will study it) the Poetic Vision that lies at
 ‘ the bottom of all other Knowledge or Action ; and is the source and
 ‘ creative fountain of whatsoever mortals *ken* or *can*, and mystically
 ‘ and miraculously guides them forward whither they are to go. Be
 ‘ the Man with the Lamp, then, named REASON ; mankind’s noblest
 ‘ inspired Insight and Light ; whereof all the other lights are but
 ‘ effluences, and more or less discoloured emanations.

‘ His Wife, poor old woman, we shall call PRACTICAL ENDEAVOUR ;
 ‘ which as married to Reason, to spiritual Vision and Belief, first
 ‘ makes-up man’s being here below. Unhappily the ancient couple,
 ‘ we find, are but in a decayed condition : the better emblems are they
 ‘ of Reason and Endeavour in this our “transitory age” ! The Man
 ‘ presents himself in the garb of a peasant, the Woman has grown old,
 ‘ garrulous, querulous ; both live nevertheless in their “ancient cot-
 ‘ tage,” better or worse, the roof-tree of which still holds together over
 ‘ them. And then those mischievous Will-o’-wisps, who pay the old
 ‘ lady such court, and eat all the old gold (all that was wise and beau-
 ‘ tiful and desirable) off her walls ; and show the old stones, quite
 ‘ ugly and bare, as they had not been for ages ! Besides they have
 ‘ killed poor Mops, the plaything, and joy and fondling of the house ;
 ‘ —as has not that same Elegant Culture, or French Philosophy done,
 ‘ wheresoever it has arrived ? Mark, notwithstanding, how the Man
 ‘ with the Lamp puts it all right again, reconciles everything, and
 ‘ makes the finest business out of what seemed the worst.

‘ With regard to the Four Kings, and the Temple which lies
 ‘ fashioned underground, please to consider all this as the Future
 ‘ lying prepared and certain under the Present : you observe, not
 ‘ only inspired Reason (or the Man with the Lamp), but scientific
 ‘ Thought (or the Snake), can discern it lying there : nevertheless
 ‘ much work must be done, innumerable difficulties fronted and con-
 ‘ quered, before it can rise out of the depths (of the Future), and
 ‘ realise itself as the actual worshipping-place of man, and “the most
 ‘ frequented Temple in the whole Earth.”

‘ As for the fair Lily and her ambulatory necessitous Prince, these
 ‘ are objects that I shall admit myself incapable of naming : yet no-
 ‘ wise admit myself incapable of attaching meaning to. Consider
 ‘ them as the two disjointed Halves of this singular Dualistic Being
 ‘ of ours ; a Being, I must say, the most utterly Dualistic ; fashioned,

‘ from the very heart of it, out of Positive and Negative (what we
 ‘ happily call Light and Darkness, Necessity and Freewill, Good and
 ‘ Evil, and the like) ; everywhere out of *two* mortally opposed things,
 ‘ which yet must be united in vital love, if there is to be any *Life* ;—
 ‘ a Being, I repeat, Dualistic beyond expressing ; which will split
 ‘ in two, strike it in *any* direction, on *any* of its six sides ; and does
 ‘ of itself split in two (into Contradiction), every hour of the day,—
 ‘ were not *Life* perpetually there, perpetually knitting it together
 ‘ again ! But as to that cutting-up, and parcelling, and labelling of
 ‘ the indivisible Human Soul into what are called “ Faculties,” it is
 ‘ a thing I have from of old eschewed, and even hated. A thing
 ‘ which you *must* sometimes do (or you cannot *speak*) ; yet which is
 ‘ never done without Error hovering near you ; for most part, without
 ‘ her pouncing on you, and quite blindfolding you.

‘ Let not us, therefore, in looking at Lily and her Prince be
 ‘ tempted to that practice : why should we try to *name* them at all ?
 ‘ Enough, if we do feel that man’s whole Being is riven asunder every
 ‘ way (in this “ transitionary age”), and yawning in hostile, irrecon-
 ‘ cilable contradiction with itself : what good were it to know farther
 ‘ in what *direction* the rift (as our Poet here pleased to represent it)
 ‘ had taken effect ? Fancy, however, that these two HALVES of Man’s
 ‘ Soul and Being are separated, in pain and enchanted obstruction,
 ‘ from one another. The better, fairer Half sits in the Supernatural
 ‘ country, deadening and killing ; alas, not permitted to come across
 ‘ into the Natural visible country, and there make all blessed and
 ‘ alive ! The rugged stronger Half, in such separation, is quite lamed
 ‘ and paralytic ; wretched, forlorn, in a state of death-life, must he
 ‘ wander to and fro over the River of Time ; all that is dear and
 ‘ essential to him, imprisoned there ; which if he look at, he grows
 ‘ still weaker, which if he touch, he dies. Poor Prince ! And let the
 ‘ judicious reader, who has read the Era he lives in, or even spelt
 ‘ the alphabet thereof, say whether, with the paralytic-lamed Activity
 ‘ of man (hampered and hamstrung in a “ transitionary age” of Scep-
 ‘ ticism, Methodism ; atheistic Sarcasm, hysteric Orgasm ; brazen-faced
 ‘ Delusion, Puffery, Hypocrisy, Stupidity, and the whole Bill and
 ‘ nothing but the Bill), it is not even so ? Must not poor man’s
 ‘ Activity (like this poor Prince) wander from Natural to Super-
 ‘ natural, and back again, disconsolate enough ; unable to *do* any-

‘ thing, except merely wring its hands, and, whimpering and blubbering, lamentably inquire : *What* shall I do ?

‘ But Courage ! Courage ! The Temple is built (though underground) ; the Bridge shall arch itself, the divided Two shall clasp each other as flames do, rushing into one ; and all that ends well shall be well ! Mark only how, in this inimitable Poem, worthy of an Olympic crown, or prize of the Literary Society, it is represented as proceeding !’

So far D. T. ; a commentator who at least does not want confidence in himself : whom we shall only caution not to be too confident ; to remember always that, as he once says, ‘ Phantasmagory is not Allegory ;’ that much exists, under our very noses, which has no ‘ name,’ and can get none ; that the ‘ River of Time’ and so forth may be one thing, or more than one, or none ; that, in short, there is risk of the too valiant D. T.’s hamboozling himself in this matter ; being led from puddle to pool ; and so left standing at last, like a foolish mystified nose-of-wax, wondering where the devil he is.

To the simpler sort of readers we shall also extend an advice ; or be it rather, proffer a petition. It is to fancy themselves, for the time being, delivered altogether from D. T.’s company ; and to read this *Mährchen*, as if it were there only for its own sake, and those tag-rag Notes of his were so much blank paper. Let the simpler sort of readers say now how they like it ! If unhappily, on looking back, some spasm of ‘ the malady of thought’ begin afflicting them, let such Notes be then inquired of, but not till then, and then also with distrust. Pin thy faith to no man’s sleeve ; hast thou not two eyes of thy own ?

The Commentator himself cannot, it is to be hoped, imagine that he has exhausted the matter. To decipher and represent the *genesis* of this extraordinary Production, and what was the Author’s state of mind in producing it ; to *see*, with dim common eyes, what the great Goethe, with inspired poetic eyes, then saw ; and paint to oneself the thick-coming shapes and many-coloured splendours of his ‘ Prospero’s Grotto,’ at that hour : this were what we could call complete criticism and commentary ; what D. T. is far from having done, and ought to fall on his face, and confess that he can never do.

We shall conclude with remarking two things. First, that D. T. does not appear to have set eye on any of those German Commentaries

on this Tale of Tales ; or even to have heard, credently, that such exist : an omission, in a professed Translator, which he himself may answer for. Secondly, that with all his boundless preluding, he has forgotten to insert the Author's own prelude ; the passage, namely, by which this *Mährchen* is specially ushered in, and the key-note of it struck by the Composer himself, and the tone of the whole prescribed ! This latter altogether glaring omission we now charitably supply ; and then let D. T., and his illustrious Original, and the Readers of this Magazine take it among them. Turn to the latter part of the *Deutschen Ausgewanderten* (page 208, Volume xv. of the last Edition of *Goethes Werke*) ; it is written there, as we render it :

“ ‘The Imagination,’ said Karl, “is a fine faculty ; yet I like not when she works on what has actually happened : the airy forms she creates are welcome as things of their own kind ; but uniting with Truth she produces oftenest nothing but monsters ; and seems to me, in such cases, to fly into direct variance with Reason and Common Sense. She ought, you might say, to hang upon no object, to force no object on us ; she must, if she is to produce Works of Art, play like a sort of music upon us ; move us within ourselves, and this in such a way that we forget there is anything without us producing the movement.”

“ ‘Proceed no farther,” said the old man, “with your conditions ! To enjoy a product of Imagination, this also is a condition, that we enjoy it unconditionally ; for Imagination herself cannot condition and bargain ; she must wait what shall be given her. She forms no plans, prescribes for herself no path ; but is borne and guided by her own pinions ; and hovering hither and thither, marks out the strangest courses ; which in their direction are ever altering. Let me but, on my evening walk, call up again to life within me, some wondrous figures I was wont to play with in earlier years. This night I promise you a Tale, which shall remind you of Nothing and of All.”’

And now for it.

O. Y.

THE TALE ('DAS MAHRCHEN'), BY GOETHE.

IN his little Hut, by the great River, which a heavy rain had swoln to overflowing, lay the ancient Ferryman, asleep, wearied by the toil of the day. In the middle of the night,² loud voices awoke him; he heard that it was travellers wishing to be carried over.

Stepping out, he saw two large Will-o'-wispes, hovering to and fro on his boat, which lay moored: they said, they were in violent haste, and should have been already on the other side. The old Ferryman made no loitering; pushed off, and steered with his usual skill obliquely through the stream; while the two strangers whiffled and hissed together, in an unknown very rapid tongue, and every now and then broke out in loud laughter, hopping about, at one time on the gunwale and the seats, at another on the bottom of the boat.

"The boat is heeling!" cried the old man; "if you don't be quiet, it will overset; be seated, gentlemen of the wisp!"

At this advice they burst into a fit of laughter, mocked the old man, and were more unquiet than ever. He bore their mischief with patience, and soon reached the farther shore.

"Here is for your labour!" cried the travellers; and as they shook themselves, a heap of glittering gold-pieces jingled down into the wet boat. "For Heaven's sake, what are you about?" cried the old man; "you will ruin me forever! Had a single piece of gold got into the water, the stream, which cannot suffer gold, would have risen in horrid waves, and swallowed both my skiff and me; and who knows how it might have fared with you in that case? here, take back your gold."

"We can take nothing back, which we have once shaken from us," said the Lights.

"Then you give me the trouble," said the old man, stooping down, and gathering the pieces into his cap, "of raking them together, and carrying them ashore and burying them."

The Lights had leaped from the boat, but the old man cried: "Stay; where is my fare?"

"If you take no gold, you may work for nothing," cried the Will-o'-wispes.—"You must know that I am only to be paid with fruits of the earth."—"Fruits of the earth? we despise them, and have never tasted them."—"And yet I cannot let you go, till you have promised that you will deliver me three Cabbages, three Artichokes, and three large Onions."

² In the middle of the night, truly! In the middle of the Dark Ages, when what with Mahomedan Conquests, what with Christian Crusadings, Destructions of Constantinople, Discoveries of America, the TIME-River was indeed swoln to overflowing; and the *Ignes Fatui* (of Elegant Culture, of Literature) must needs feel in haste to get over into Existence, being much wanted; and apply to the Priesthood (respectable old Ferryman, roused out of sleep thereby!), who willingly introduced them, mischievous ungrateful imps as they were.—D. T.

The Lights were making-off with jests; but they felt themselves, in some inexplicable manner, fastened to the ground: it was the unpleasantest feeling they had ever had. They engaged to pay him his demand as soon as possible: he let them go, and pushed away. He was gone a good distance, when they called to him: "Old man! Holla, old man! the main point is forgotten!"³ He was off, however, and did not hear them. He had fallen quietly down that side of the River, where, in a rocky spot, which the water never reached, he meant to bury the pernicious gold. Here, between two high crags, he found a monstrous chasm; shook the metal into it, and steered back to his cottage.

Now in this chasm lay the fair green Snake, who was roused from her sleep by the gold coming chinking down.⁴ No sooner did she fix her eye on the glittering coins, than she ate them all up, with the greatest relish, on the spot; and carefully picked out such pieces as were scattered in the chinks of the rock.

Scarcely had she swallowed them, when, with extreme delight, she began to feel the metal melting in her inwards, and spreading all over her body; and soon, to her lively joy, she observed that she was grown transparent and luminous. Long ago she had been told that this was possible; but now being doubtful whether such a light could last, her curiosity and the desire to be secure against the future, drove her from her cell, that she might see who it was that had shaken-in this precious metal. She found no one. The more delightful was it to admire her own appearance, and her graceful brightness, as she crawled along through roots and bushes, and spread out her light among the grass. Every leaf seemed of emerald, every flower was dyed with new glory. It was in vain that she crossed the solitary thickets; but her hopes rose high, when, on reaching the open country, she perceived from afar a brilliancy resembling her own. "Shall I find my like at last, then?" cried she, and hastened to the spot. The toil of crawling through bog and reeds gave her little thought; for though she liked best to live in dry grassy spots of the mountains, among the clefts of rocks, and for most part fed on spicy herbs, and slaked her thirst with mild dew and fresh spring-water, yet for the sake of this dear gold, and in the hope of this glorious light, she would have undertaken anything you could propose to her.

At last, with much fatigue, she reached a wet rushy spot in the swamp, where our two Will-o'-wisps were frisking to and fro. She shoved herself along to them; saluted them, was happy to meet such pleasant gentlemen related to her family. The Lights glided towards her, skipped up over her, and laughed in their fashion. "Lady Cousin," said they, "you are of the horizontal line, yet what of that? It is true we are related only by the

³ What could this be? To ask whither their next road lay? It was useless to ask there: the respectable old Priesthood 'did not hear them.'—D. T.

⁴ THOUGHT, Understanding, roused from her long sleep by the first produce of modern Belles Lettres; which she eagerly devours.—D. T.

look; for, observe you," here both the Flames, compressing their whole breadth, made themselves as high and peaked as possible, "how prettily this taper length beseeems us gentlemen of the vertical line! Take it not amiss of us, good Lady; what family can boast of such a thing? Since there ever was a Jack-o'-lantern in the world, no one of them has either sat or lain."

The Snake felt exceedingly uncomfortable in the company of these relations; for, let her hold her head as high as possible, she found that she must bend it to the earth again, would she stir from the spot;⁵ and if in the dark thicket she had been extremely satisfied with her appearance, her splendour in the presence of these cousins seemed to lessen every moment, nay she was afraid that at last it would go out entirely.

In this embarrassment she hastily asked: If the gentlemen could not inform her, whence the glittering gold came, that had fallen a short while ago into the cleft of the rock; her own opinion was, that it had been a golden shower, and had trickled down direct from the sky. The Will-o'-wisps laughed, and shook themselves, and a multitude of gold-pieces came clinking down about them. The Snake pushed nimbly forwards to eat the coin. "Much good may it do you, Mistress," said the dapper gentlemen: "we can help you to a little more." They shook themselves again several times with great quickness, so that the Snake could scarcely gulp the precious victuals fast enough. Her splendour visibly began increasing; she was really shining beautifully, while the Lights had in the mean time grown rather lean and short of stature, without however in the smallest losing their good-humour.

"I am obliged to you forever," said the Snake, having got her wind again after the repast; "ask of me what you will; all that I can I will do."

"Very good!" cried the Lights. "Then tell us where the fair Lily dwells? Lead us to the fair Lily's palace and garden; and do not lose a moment, we are dying of impatience to fall down at her feet."

"This service," said the Snake with a deep sigh, "I cannot now do for you. The fair Lily dwells, alas, on the other side of the water."—"Other side of the water? And we have come across it, this stormy night! How cruel is the River to divide us! Would it not be possible to call the old man back?"

"It would be useless," said the Snake; "for if you found him ready on the bank, he would not take you in; he can carry any one to this side, none to yonder."

"Here is a pretty kettle of fish!" cried the Lights: "are there no other means of getting through the water?"—"There are other means, but not at this moment. I myself could take you over, gentlemen, but not till noon."

⁵ True enough: Thought cannot fly and dance, as your wildfire of Belles Lettres may; she proceeds in the systole-diastole, up-and-down method; and must ever 'bend her head to the earth again' (in the way of Baconian Experiment), or she will not stir from the spot.—D. T.

—"That is an hour we do not like to travel in."—"Then you may go across in the evening, on the great Giant's shadow."—"How is that?"—"The great Giant lives not far from this; with his body he has no power; his hands cannot lift a straw, his shoulders could not bear a faggot of twigs; but with his shadow he has power over much, nay all.⁶ At sunrise and sunset therefore he is strongest; so at evening you merely put yourself upon the back of his shadow, the Giant walks softly to the bank, and the shadow carries you across the water. But if you please, about the hour of noon, to be in waiting at that corner of the wood where the bushes overhang the bank, I myself will take you over and present you to the fair Lily: or on the other hand, if you dislike the noontide, you have just to go at nightfall to that bend of the rocks, and pay a visit to the Giant; he will certainly receive you like a gentleman."

With a slight bow, the Flames went off; and the Snake at bottom was not discontented to get rid of them; partly that she might enjoy the brightness of her own light, partly satisfy a curiosity with which, for a long time, she had been agitated in a singular way.

In the chasm, where she often crawled hither and thither, she had made a strange discovery. For although in creeping up and down this abyss, she had never had a ray of light, she could well enough discriminate the objects in it, by her sense of touch. Generally she met with nothing but irregular productions of Nature; at one time she would wind between the teeth of large crystals, at another she would feel the barbs and hairs of native silver, and now and then carry out with her to the light some straggling jewels.⁷ But to her no small wonder, in a rock which was closed on every side, she had come on certain objects which betrayed the shaping hand of man. Smooth walls on which she could not climb, sharp regular corners, well-formed pillars; and what seemed strangest of all, human figures which she had entwined more than once, and which appeared to her to be of brass, or of the finest polished marble. All these experiences she now wished to combine by the sense of sight, thereby to confirm what as yet she only guessed. She believed she could illuminate the whole of that subterranean vault by her own light; and hoped to get acquainted with these curious things at once. She hastened back; and soon found, by the usual way, the cleft by which she used to penetrate the Sanctuary.

On reaching the place, she gazed around with eager curiosity; and though her shining could not enlighten every object in the rotunda, yet those nearest her were plain enough. With astonishment and reverence she looked up into a glancing niche, where the image of an august King stood formed of pure Gold. In size the figure was beyond the stature of

⁶ Is not SUPERSTITION strongest when the sun is low? with body, powerless; with shadow, omnipotent?—D. T.

⁷ Primitive employments, and attainments, of Thought, in this dark den whither it is sent to dwell. For many long ages, it discerns 'nothing but irregular productions of Nature;' having indeed to pick material bed and board out of Nature and her irregular productions.—D. T.

man, but by its shape it seemed the likeness of a little rather than a tall person. His handsome body was encircled with an unadorned mantle; and a garland of oak bound his hair together.

No sooner had the Snake beheld this reverend figure, than the King began to speak, and asked: "Whence comest thou?"—"From the chasms where the gold dwells," said the Snake.—"What is grander than gold?" inquired the King.—"Light," replied the Snake.—"What is more refreshing than light?" said he.—"Speech," answered she.

During this conversation, she had squinted to a side, and in the nearest niche perceived another glorious image. It was a Silver King in a sitting posture; his shape was long and rather languid; he was covered with a decorated robe; crown, girdle and sceptre were adorned with precious stones: the cheerfulness of pride was in his countenance; he seemed about to speak, when a vein which ran dimly-coloured over the marble wall, on a sudden became bright, and diffused a cheerful light throughout the whole Temple. By this brilliancy the Snake perceived a third King, made of Brass, and sitting mighty in shape, leaning on his club, adorned with a laurel garland, and more like a rock than a man. She was looking for the fourth, which was standing at the greatest distance from her; but the wall opened, while the glittering vein started and split, as lightning does, and disappeared.

A Man of middle stature, entering through the cleft, attracted the attention of the Snake. He was dressed like a peasant, and carried in his hand a little Lamp, on whose still flame you liked to look, and which in a strange manner, without casting any shadow, enlightened the whole dome.⁸

"Why comest thou, since we have light?" said the golden King.—"You know that I may not enlighten what is dark."⁹—"Will my Kingdom end?" said the silver King.—"Late or never," said the old Man.

With a stronger voice the brazen King began to ask: "When shall I arise?"—"Soon," replied the Man.—"With whom shall I combine?" said the King.—"With thy elder brothers," said the Man.—"What will the youngest do?" inquired the King.—"He will sit down," replied the Man.

"I am not tired," cried the fourth King, with a rough faltering voice.¹⁰

While this speech was going on, the Snake had glided softly round the Temple, viewing everything; she was now looking at the fourth King close by him. He stood leaning on a pillar; his considerable form was heavy rather than beautiful. But what metal it was made of could not be deter-

⁸ Poetic Light, celestial Reason!—D. T.

Let the reader, in one word, attend well to these four Kings: much annotation from D. T. is here necessarily swept out.—O. Y.

⁹ What is wholly dark. Understanding precedes Reason: modern Science is come; modern Poesy is still but coming,—in Goethe (and whom else?).—D. T.

¹⁰ Consider these Kings as Eras of the World's History; no, not as Eras, but as Principles which jointly or severally rule Eras. Alas, poor we, in this chaotic, soft-soldered 'transitory age,' are so unfortunate as to live under the Fourth King.—D. T.

mined. Closely inspected, it seemed a mixture of the three metals which its brothers had been formed of. But in the founding, these materials did not seem to have combined together fully; gold and silver veins ran irregularly through a brazen mass, and gave the figure an unpleasant aspect.

Meanwhile the gold King was asking of the Man, "How many secrets knowest thou?"—"Three," replied the Man.—"Which is the most important?" said the silver King.—"The open one," replied the other.¹¹—"Wilt thou open it to us also?" said the brass King.—"When I know the fourth," replied the Man.—"What care I?" grumbled the composite King, in an undertone.

"I know the fourth," said the Snake; approached the old Man, and hissed somewhat in his ear. "The time is at hand!" cried the old Man, with a strong voice. The temple reëchoed, the metal statues sounded; and that instant the old Man sank away to the westward, and the Snake to the eastward; and both of them passed through the clefts of the rock, with the greatest speed.

All the passages, through which the old Man travelled, filled themselves, immediately behind him, with gold; for his Lamp had the strange property of changing stone into gold, wood into silver, dead animals into precious stones, and of annihilating all metals. But to display this power, it must shine alone. If another light were beside it, the Lamp only cast from it a pure clear brightness, and all livings things were refreshed by it.¹²

The old Man entered his cottage, which was built on the slope of the hill. He found his Wife in extreme distress. She was sitting at the fire weeping, and refusing to be consoled. "How unhappy am I!" cried she: "Did not I entreat thee not to go away tonight?"—"What is the matter, then?" inquired the husband, quite composed.

"Scarcely wert thou gone," said she, sobbing, "when there came two noisy Travellers to the door: unthinkingly I let them in; they seemed to be a couple of genteel, very honourable people; they were dressed in flames, you would have taken them for Will-o'-wisps. But no sooner were they in the house, than they began, like impudent varlets, to compliment me,¹³ and grew so forward that I feel ashamed to think of it."

"No doubt," said the husband with a smile, "the gentlemen were jesting: considering thy age, they might have held by general politeness."

"Age! what age?" cried the Wife: "wilt thou always be talking of my age? How old am I, then?—General politeness! But I know what I

¹¹ Reader, hast thou any glimpse of the 'open secret'? I fear, not.—D. T. Writer, art thou a goose? I fear, yes.—O. Y.

¹² In Illuminated Ages, the Age of Miracles is said to cease; but it is only woe that cease to see it, for we are still 'refreshed by it.'—D. T.

¹³ Poor old Practical Endeavour! Listen to many an *encyclopedic* Diderot, humanised *Philosophe*, didactic singer, march-of-intellect man, and other 'impudent varlets' (who would never put their own finger to the work); and hear what 'compliments' they uttered.—D. T.

know. Look round there what a face the walls have; look at the old stones, which I have not seen these hundred years; every film of gold have they licked away, thou couldst not think how fast; and still they kept assuring me that it tasted far beyond common gold. Once they had swept the walls, the fellows seemed to be in high spirits, and truly in that little while they had grown much broader and brighter. They now began to be impertinent again, they patted me, and called me their queen, they shook themselves, and a shower of gold-pieces sprang from them; see how they are shining there under the bench! But ah, what misery! Poor Mops ate a coin or two; and look, he is lying in the chimney, dead. Poor Pug! O well-a-day! I did not see it till they were gone; else I had never promised to pay the Ferryman the debt they owe him.”—"What do they owe him?" said the Man.—"Three Cabbages," replied the Wife, "three Artichokes and three Onions: I engaged to go when it was day, and take them to the River."

"Thou mayest do them that civility," said the old Man; "they may chance to be of use to us again."

"Whether they will be of use to us I know not; but they promised and vowed that they would."

Meantime the fire on the hearth had burnt low; the old Man covered-up the embers with a heap of ashes, and put the glittering gold-pieces aside; so that his little Lamp now gleamed alone, in the fairest brightness. The walls again coated themselves with gold, and Mops changed into the prettiest onyx that could be imagined. The alternation of the brown and black in this precious stone made it the most curious piece of workmanship.

"Take thy basket," said the Man, "and put the onyx into it; then take the three Cabbages, the three Artichokes and the three Onions; place them round little Mops, and carry them to the River. At noon the Snake will take thee over; visit the fair Lily, give her the onyx, she will make it alive by her touch, as by her touch she kills whatever is alive already. She will have a true companion in the little dog. Tell her, Not to mourn; her deliverance is near; the greatest misfortune she may look upon as the greatest happiness; for the time is at hand."

The old Woman filled her basket, and set out as soon as it was day. The rising sun shone clear from the other side of the River, which was glittering in the distance: the old Woman walked with slow steps, for the basket pressed upon her head, and it was not the onyx that so burdened her. Whatever lifeless thing she might be carrying, she did not feel the weight of it; on the other hand, in those cases the basket rose aloft, and hovered along above her head. But to carry any fresh herbage, or any little living animal, she found exceedingly laborious.¹⁴ She had travelled

¹⁴ Why so? Is it because with 'lifeless things' (with inanimate *machinery*) all goes like clock-work, which it is, and 'the basket hovers aloft;' while with living things (were it but the culture of forest-trees) poor Endeavour has more difficulty?—D. T. Or is it chiefly because a Tale must be a Tale?—O. Y.

on for some time, in a sullen humour, when she halted suddenly in fright, for she had almost trod upon the Giant's shadow, which was stretching towards her across the plain. And now, lifting up her eyes, she saw the monster of a Giant himself, who had been bathing in the River, and was just come out,¹⁵ and she knew not how she should avoid him. The moment he perceived her, he began saluting her in sport, and the hands of his shadow soon caught hold of the basket. With dexterous ease they picked away from it a Cabbage, an Artichoke and an Onion, and brought them to the Giant's mouth, who then went his way up the River, and let the Woman go in peace.

She considered whether it would not be better to return, and supply from her garden the pieces she had lost; and amid these doubts, she still kept walking on, so that in a little while she was at the bank of the River. She sat long waiting for the Ferryman, whom she perceived at last, steering over with a very singular traveller. A young, noble-looking, handsome man, whom she could not gaze upon enough, stepped out of the boat.

"What is it you bring?" cried the old Man.—"The greens which those two Will-o'-wisps owe you," said the Woman, pointing to her ware. As the Ferryman found only two of each sort, he grew angry, and declared he would have none of them. The Woman earnestly entreated him to take them; told him that she could not now go home, and that her burden for the way which still remained was very heavy. He stood by his refusal, and assured her that it did not rest with him. "What belongs to me," said he, "I must leave lying nine hours in a heap, touching none of it, till I have given the River its third." After much higgling, the old Man at last replied: "There is still another way. If you like to pledge yourself to the River, and declare yourself its debtor, I will take the six pieces; but there is some risk in it."—"If I keep my word, I shall run no risk?"—"Not the smallest. Put your hand into the stream," continued he, "and promise that within four-and-twenty hours you will pay the debt."

The old Woman did so; but what was her affright, when on drawing out her hand, she found it black as coal! She loudly scolded the old Ferryman; declared that her hands had always been the fairest part of her; that in spite of her hard work, she had all along contrived to keep these noble members white and dainty. She looked at the hand with indignation, and exclaimed in a despairing tone: "Worse and worse! Look, it is vanishing entirely; it is grown far smaller than the other."¹⁶

"For the present it but seems so," said the old Man; "if you do not keep your word, however, it may prove so in earnest. The hand will gradually diminish, and at length disappear altogether, though you have the use of it as formerly. Everything as usual you will be able to perform

¹⁵ Very proper in the huge *Loggerhead Superstition*, to bathe himself in the element of TIME, and get refreshment thereby.—D. T.

¹⁶ A dangerous thing to pledge yourself to the Time-River;—as many a National Debt, and the like, blackening, bewitching the 'beautiful hand' of Endeavour, can witness.—D. T. Heavens!—O. Y.

with it, only nobody will see it."—"I had rather that I could not use it, and no one could observe the want," cried she: "but what of that, I will keep my word, and rid myself of this black skin, and all anxieties about it." Thereupon she hastily took up her basket, which mounted of itself over her head, and hovered free above her in the air, as she hurried after the Youth, who was walking softly and thoughtfully down the bank. His noble form and strange dress had made a deep impression on her.

His breast was covered with a glittering coat of mail; in whose wavings might be traced every motion of his fair body. From his shoulders hung a purple cloak; around his uncovered head flowed abundant brown hair in beautiful locks: his graceful face, and his well-formed feet were exposed to the scorching of the sun. With bare soles, he walked composedly over the hot sand; and a deep inward sorrow seemed to blunt him against all external things.

The garrulous old Woman tried to lead him into conversation; but with his short answers he gave her small encouragement or information; so that in the end, notwithstanding the beauty of his eyes, she grew tired of speaking with him to no purpose, and took leave of him with these words: "You walk too slow for me, worthy sir; I must not lose a moment, for I have to pass the River on the green Snake, and carry this fine present from my husband to the fair Lily." So saying she stept faster forward; but the fair Youth pushed on with equal speed, and hastened to keep up with her. "You are going to the fair Lily!" cried he; "then our roads are the same. But what present is this you are bringing her?"

"Sir," said the Woman, "it is hardly fair, after so briefly dismissing the questions I put to you, to inquire with such vivacity about my secrets. But if you like to barter, and tell me your adventures, I will not conceal from you how it stands with me and my presents." They soon made a bargain; the dame disclosed her circumstances to him; told the history of the Pug, and let him see the singular gift.

He lifted this natural curiosity from the basket, and took Mops, who seemed as if sleeping softly, into his arms. "Happy beast!" cried he; "thou wilt be touched by her hands, thou wilt be made alive by her; while the living are obliged to fly from her presence to escape a mournful doom. Yet why say I mournful? Is it not far sadder and more frightful to be injured by her look, than it would be to die by her hand? Behold me," said he to the Woman; "at my years, what a miserable fate have I to undergo! This mail which I have honourably borne in war, this purple which I sought to merit by a wise reign, Destiny has left me; the one as a useless burden, the other as an empty ornament. Crown, and sceptre, and sword are gone; and I am as bare and needy as any other son of earth; for so unblest are her bright eyes, that they take from every living creature they look-on all its force, and those whom the touch of her hand does not kill are changed to the state of shadows wandering alive."

Thus did he continue to bewail, nowise contenting the old Woman's curiosity, who wished for information not so much of his internal as of his

external situation. She learned neither the name of his father, nor of his kingdom. He stroked the hard Mops, whom the sunbeams and the bosom of the youth had warmed as if he had been living. He inquired narrowly about the Man with the Lamp, about the influences of the sacred light, appearing to expect much good from it in his melancholy case.

Amid such conversation, they descried from afar the majestic arch of the Bridge, which extended from the one bank to the other, glittering with the strangest colours in the splendours of the sun. Both were astonished; for until now they had never seen this edifice so grand. "How!" cried the Prince, "was it not beautiful enough, as it stood before our eyes, piled out of jasper and agate? Shall we not fear to tread it, now that it appears combined, in graceful complexity of emerald and chrysopras and chrysolite?" Neither of them knew the alteration that had taken place upon the Snake: for it was indeed the Snake, who every day at noon curved herself over the River, and stood forth in the form of a bold-swell-ing bridge.¹⁷ The travellers stepped upon it with a reverential feeling, and passed over it in silence.

No sooner had they reached the other shore, than the bridge began to heave and stir; in a little while, it touched the surface of the water, and the green Snake in her proper form came gliding after the wanderers. They had scarcely thanked her for the privilege of crossing on her back, when they found that, besides them three, there must be other persons in the company, whom their eyes could not discern. They heard a hissing, which the Snake also answered with a hissing; they listened, and at length caught what follows: "We shall first look about us in the fair Lily's Park," said a pair of alternating voices; "and then request you at night-fall, so soon as we are anywise presentable, to introduce us to this paragon of beauty. At the shore of the great Lake you will find us."—"Be it so," replied the Snake; and a hissing sound died away in the air.

Our three travellers now consulted in what order they should introduce themselves to the fair Lady; for however many people might be in her company, they were obliged to enter and depart singly, under pain of suffering very hard severities.

The Woman with the metamorphosed Pug in the basket first approached the garden, looking round for her Patroness; who was not difficult to find, being just engaged in singing to her harp. The finest tones proceeded from her, first like circles on the surface of the still lake, then like a light breath they set the grass and the bushes in motion. In a green enclosure, under the shadow of a stately group of many diverse trees, was she seated; and again did she enchant the eyes, the ears and the heart of the Woman, who approached with rapture, and swore within herself that since she saw her last, the fair one had grown fairer than ever. With eager gladness, from a distance, she expressed her reverence and

¹⁷ If aught can overspan the Time-River, then what but Understanding, but Thought, in its moment of plenitude, in its favourable noon-moment?—D. T.

admiration for the lovely maiden. "What a happiness to see you! what a Heaven does your presence spread around you! How charmingly the harp is leaning on your bosom, how softly your arms surround it, how it seems as if longing to be near you, and how it sounds so meekly under the touch of your slim fingers! Thrice-happy youth, to whom it were permitted to be there!"

So speaking she approached; the fair Lily raised her eyes; let her hands drop from the harp, and answered: "Trouble me not with untimely praise; I feel my misery but the more deeply. Look here, at my feet lies the poor Canary-bird, which used so beautifully to accompany my singing; it would sit upon my harp, and was trained not to touch me; but today, while I, refreshed by sleep, was raising a peaceful morning hymn, and my little singer was pouring forth his harmonious tones more gaily than ever, a Hawk darts over my head; the poor little creature, in affright, takes refuge in my bosom, and I feel the last palpitations of its departing life. The plundering Hawk indeed was caught by my look, and fluttered fainting down into the water; but what can his punishment avail me? my darling is dead, and his grave will but increase the mournful bushes of my garden."

"Take courage, fairest Lily!" cried the Woman, wiping off a tear, which the story of the hapless maiden had called into her eyes; "compose yourself; my old man bids me tell you to moderate your lamenting, to look upon the greatest misfortune as a forerunner of the greatest happiness, for the time is at hand; and truly," continued she, "the world is going strangely on of late. Do but look at my hand, how black it is! As I live and breathe, it is grown far smaller: I must hasten, before it vanish altogether! Why did I engage to do the Will-o'-wisps a service, why did I meet the Giant's shadow, and dip my hand in the River? Could you not afford me a single cabbage, an artichoke and an onion? I would give them to the River, and my hand were white as ever, so that I could almost show it with one of yours."

"Cabbages and onions thou mayest still find; but artichokes thou wilt search for in vain. No plant in my garden bears either flowers or fruit; but every twig that I break, and plant upon the grave of a favourite, grows green straightway, and shoots up in fair boughs. All these groups, these bushes, these groves my hard destiny has so raised around me. These pines stretching out like parasols, these obelisks of cypresses, these colossal oaks and beeches, were all little twigs planted by my hand, as mournful memorials in a soil that otherwise is barren."¹³

To this speech the old Woman had paid little heed; she was looking at her hand, which, in presence of the fair Lily, seemed every moment growing blacker and smaller. She was about to snatch her basket and

¹³ In SUPERNATURALISM truly, what is there either of flower or of fruit? Nothing that will (altogether) content the greedy Time-River. Stupendous, funereal sacred groves, 'in a soil that otherwise is barren!'—D. T.

hasten off, when she noticed that the best part of her errand had been forgotten. She lifted out the onyx Pug, and set him down, not far from the fair one, in the grass. "My husband," said she, "sends you this memorial; you know that you can make a jewel live by touching it. This pretty faithful dog will certainly afford you much enjoyment; and my grief at losing him is brightened only by the thought that he will be in your possession."

The fair Lily viewed the dainty creature with a pleased and, as it seemed, with an astonished look. "Many signs combine," said she, "that breathe some hope into me: but ah! is it not a natural deception which makes us fancy, when misfortunes crowd upon us, that a better day is near?"

"What can these many signs avail me?
 My Singer's Death, thy coal-black Hand?
 This Dog of Onyx, that can never fail me?
 And coming at the Lamp's command?
 From human joys removed forever,
 With sorrows compassed round I sit:
 Is there a Temple at the River?
 Is there a Bridge? Alas, not yet!"

The good old dame had listened with impatience to this singing, which the fair Lily accompanied with her harp, in a way that would have charmed any other. She was on the point of taking leave, when the arrival of the green Snake again detained her. The Snake had caught the last lines of the song, and on this matter forthwith began to speak comfort to the fair Lily.

"The prophecy of the Bridge is fulfilled!" cried the Snake: "you may ask this worthy dame how royally the arch looks now. What formerly was untransparent jasper, or agate, allowing but a gleam of light to pass about its edges, is now become transparent precious stone. No beryl is so clear, no emerald so beautiful of hue."

"I wish you joy of it," said Lily; "but you will pardon me if I regard the prophecy as yet unaccomplished. The lofty arch of your bridge can still but admit foot-passengers; and it is promised us that horses and carriages and travellers of every sort shall, at the same moment, cross this bridge in both directions. Is there not something said, too, about pillars, which are to arise of themselves from the waters of the River?"

The old Woman still kept her eyes fixed on her hand; she here interrupted their dialogue, and was taking leave. "Wait a moment," said the fair Lily, "and carry my little bird with you. Bid the Lamp change it into topaz; I will enliven it by my touch; with your good Mops it shall form my dearest pastime: but hasten, hasten; for, at sunset, intolerable putrefaction will fasten on the hapless bird, and tear asunder the fair combination of its form forever."

The old Woman laid the little corpse, wrapped in soft leaves, into her basket, and hastened away.

"However it may be," said the Snake, recommencing their interrupted dialogue, "the Temple is built."

"But it is not at the River," said the fair one.

"It is yet resting in the depths of the Earth," said the Snake; "I have seen the Kings and conversed with them."

"But when will they arise?" inquired Lily.

The Snake replied: "I heard resounding in the Temple these deep words, *The time is at hand.*"

A pleasing cheerfulness spread over the fair Lily's face: "'Tis the second time," said she, "that I have heard these happy words today: when will the day come for me to hear them thrice?"

She arose, and immediately there came a lovely maiden from the grove, and took away her harp. Another followed her, and folded-up the fine carved ivory stool, on which the fair one had been sitting, and put the silvery cushion under her arm. A third then made her appearance, with a large parasol worked with pearls; and looked whether Lily would require her in walking. These three maidens were beyond expression beautiful; and yet their beauty but exalted that of Lily, for it was plain to every one that they could never be compared to her.¹⁹

Meanwhile the fair one had been looking, with a satisfied aspect, at the strange onyx Mops. She bent down and touched him, and that instant he started up. Gaily he looked around, ran hither and thither, and at last, in his kindest manner, hastened to salute his benefactress. She took him in her arms, and pressed him to her. "Cold as thou art," cried she, "and though but a half-life works in thee, thou art welcome to me; tenderly will I love thee, prettily will I play with thee, softly caress thee, and firmly press thee to my bosom." She then let him go, chased him from her, called him back, and played so daintily with him, and ran about so gaily and so innocently with him on the grass, that with new rapture you viewed and participated in her joy, as a little while ago her sorrow had attuned every heart to sympathy.

This cheerfulness, these graceful sports were interrupted by the entrance of the woful Youth. He stepped forward, in his former guise and aspect; save that the heat of the day appeared to have fatigued him still more, and in the presence of his mistress he grew paler every moment. He bore upon his hand a Hawk, which was sitting quiet as a dove, with its body shrunk, and its wings drooping.

"It is not kind in thee," cried Lily to him, "to bring that hateful thing before my eyes, the monster, which today has killed my little singer."

"Blame not the unhappy bird!" replied the Youth; "rather blame thyself and thy destiny; and leave me to keep beside me the companion of my woe."

Meanwhile Mops ceased not teasing the fair Lily; and she replied to

¹⁹ Who are these three? Faith, Hope and Charity, or others of that kin?—D. T. Faith, Hope and Fiddlestick!—O. Y.

her transparent favourite, with friendly gestures. She clapped her hands to scare him off; then ran, to entice him after her. She tried to get him when he fled, and she chased him away when he attempted to press near her. The Youth looked on in silence, with increasing anger; but at last, when she took the odious beast, which seemed to him unutterably ugly, on her arm, pressed it to her white bosom, and kissed its black snout with her heavenly lips, his patience altogether failed him, and full of desperation he exclaimed: "Must I, who by a baleful fate exist beside thee, perhaps to the end, in an absent presence; who by thee have lost my all, my very self; must I see before my eyes, that so unnatural a monster can charm thee into gladness, can awaken thy attachment, and enjoy thy embrace? Shall I any longer keep wandering to and fro, measuring my dreary course to that side of the River and to this? No, there is still a spark of the old heroic spirit sleeping in my bosom; let it start this instant into its expiring flame! If stones may rest in thy bosom, let me be changed to stone; if thy touch kills, I will die by thy hands."

So saying he made a violent movement; the Hawk flew from his finger, but he himself rushed towards the fair one; she held out her hands to keep him off, and touched him only the sooner. Consciousness forsook him; and she felt with horror the beloved burden lying on her bosom. With a shriek she started back, and the gentle Youth sank lifeless from her arms upon the ground.

The misery had happened! The sweet Lily stood motionless gazing on the corpse. Her heart seemed to pause in her bosom; and her eyes were without tears. In vain did Mops try to gain from her any kindly gesture; with her friend, the world for her was all dead as the grave. Her silent despair did not look round for help; she knew not of any help.

On the other hand, the Snake bestirred herself the more actively; she seemed to meditate deliverance; and in fact her strange movements served at least to keep away, for a little, the immediate consequences of the mischief. With her limber body, she formed a wide circle round the corpse, and seizing the end of her tail between her teeth, she lay quite still.

Ere long one of Lily's fair waiting-maids appeared; brought the ivory folding-stool, and with friendly beckoning constrained her mistress to sit down on it. Soon afterwards there came a second; she had in her hand a fire-coloured veil, with which she rather decorated than concealed the fair Lily's head. The third handed her the harp, and scarcely had she drawn the gorgeous instrument towards her, and struck some tones from its strings, when the first maid returned with a clear round mirror; took her station opposite the fair one; caught her looks in the glass, and threw back to her the loveliest image that was to be found in Nature.²⁰ Sorrow

²⁰ Does not man's soul *rest* by Faith, and look in the *mirror* of Faith? Does not Hope 'decorate rather than conceal'? Is not Charity (Love) the beginning of *music*?—Behold too, how the Serpent, in this great hour, has made herself a Serpent-of-Eternity; and (even as genuine THOUGHT, in our age, has to do for so

heightened her beauty, the veil her charms, the harp her grace; and deeply as you wished to see her mournful situation altered, not less deeply did you wish to keep her image, as she now looked, forever present with you.

With a still look at the mirror, she touched the harp; now melting tones proceeded from the strings, now her pain seemed to mount, and the music in strong notes responded to her woe; sometimes she opened her lips to sing, but her voice failed her; and ere long her sorrow melted into tears, two maidens caught her helpfully in their arms, the harp sank from her bosom, scarcely could the quick servant snatch the instrument and carry it aside.

"Who gets us the Man with the Lamp, before the Sun set?" hissed the Snake, faintly, but audibly: the maids looked at one another, and Lily's tears fell faster. At this moment came the Woman with the Basket, panting and altogether breathless. "I am lost, and maimed for life!" cried she; "see how my hand is almost vanished; neither Ferryman nor Giant would take me over, because I am the River's debtor; in vain did I promise hundreds of cabbages and hundreds of onions; they will take no more than three; and no artichoke is now to be found in all this quarter."

"Forget your own care," said the Snake, "and try to bring help here; perhaps it may come to yourself also. Haste with your utmost speed to seek the Will-o'-wisps; it is too light for you to see them, but perhaps you will hear them laughing and hopping to and fro. If they be speedy, they may cross upon the Giant's shadow, and seek the Man with the Lamp, and send him to us."

The Woman hurried off at her quickest pace, and the Snake seemed expecting as impatiently as Lily the return of the Flames. Alas! the beam of the sinking Sun was already gilding only the highest summits of the trees in the thicket, and long shadows were stretching over lake and meadow; the Snake hitched up and down impatiently, and Lily dissolved in tears.

In this extreme need, the Snake kept looking round on all sides; for she was afraid every moment that the Sun would set, and corruption penetrate the magic circle, and the fair youth immediately moulder away. At last she noticed sailing high in the air, with purple-red feathers, the Prince's Hawk, whose breast was catching the last beams of the Sun. She shook herself for joy at this good omen; nor was she deceived; for shortly afterwards the Man with the Lamp was seen gliding towards them across the Lake, fast and smoothly, as if he had been travelling on skates.

The Snake did not change her posture; but Lily rose and called to him: "What good spirit sends thee, at the moment when we were desiring thee, and needing thee, so much?"

"The spirit of my Lamp," replied the Man, "has impelled me, and the

much) preserves the seeming-dead within her folds, that suspended animation issue not in noisome, horrible, irrevocable dissolution!—D. T.

Hawk has conducted me. My Lamp sparkles when I am needed, and I just look about me in the sky for a signal; some bird or meteor points to the quarter towards which I am to turn. Be calm, fairest Maiden! Whether I can help, I know not; an individual helps not, but he who combines himself with many at the proper hour. We will postpone the evil, and keep hoping. Hold thy circle fast," continued he, turning to the Snake; then set himself upon a hillock beside her, and illuminated the dead body. "Bring the little Bird²¹ hither too, and lay it in the circle!" The maidens took the little corpse from the basket, which the old Woman had left standing, and did as he directed.

Meanwhile the Sun had set; and as the darkness increased, not only the Snake and the old Man's Lamp began shining in their fashion, but also Lily's veil gave-out a soft light, which gracefully tinged, as with a meek dawning red, her pale cheeks and her white robe. The party looked at one another, silently reflecting; care and sorrow were mitigated by a sure hope.

It was no displeasing entrance, therefore, that the Woman made, attended by the two gay Flames, which in truth appeared to have been very lavish in the interim, for they had again become extremely meagre; yet they only bore themselves the more prettily for that, towards Lily and the other ladies. With great tact and expressiveness, they said a multitude of rather common things to these fair persons; and declared themselves particularly ravished by the charm which the gleaming veil²² spread over Lily and her attendants. The ladies modestly cast down their eyes, and the praise of their beauty made them really beautiful. All were peaceful and calm, except the old Woman. In spite of the assurance of her husband, that her hand could diminish no farther, while the Lamp shone on it, she asserted more than once, that if things went on thus, before midnight this noble member would have utterly vanished.

The Man with the Lamp had listened attentively to the conversation of the Lights; and was gratified that Lily had been cheered, in some measure, and amused by it. And, in truth, midnight had arrived they knew not how. The old Man looked to the stars, and then began speaking: "We are assembled at the propitious hour; let each perform his task, let each do his duty; and a universal happiness will swallow-up our individual sorrows, as a universal grief consumes individual joys."

At these words arose a wondrous hubbub;²³ for all the persons in the

²¹ What are the Hawk and this Canary-bird, which here prove so destructive to one another? Ministering servants, implements, of these two divided Halves of the Human Soul; name them I will not; more is not written.—D. T.

²² Have not your march-of-intellect Literators always expressed themselves particularly ravished with any glitter from a veil of *Hope*; with 'progress of the species,' and the like?—D. T.

²³ Too true: dost thou not hear it, reader? In this our Revolutionary 'twelfth hour of the night,' all persons speak aloud (some of them by cannon and drums!), 'declaring what they have to do;' and Faith, Hope and Charity (after a few pass-

party spoke aloud, each for himself, declaring what they had to do; only the three maids were silent; one of them had fallen asleep beside the harp, another near the parasol, the third by the stool; and you could not blame them much, for it was late. The Fiery Youths, after some passing compliments which they devoted to the waiting-maids, had turned their sole attention to the Princess, as alone worthy of exclusive homage.

"Take the mirror," said the Man to the Hawk; "and with the first sunbeam illuminate the three sleepers, and awake them, with light reflected from above."

The Snake now began to move; she loosened her circle, and rolled slowly, in large rings, forward to the River. The two Will-o'-wisps followed with a solemn air: you would have taken them for the most serious Flames in Nature. The old Woman and her husband seized the Basket, whose mild light they had scarcely observed till now; they lifted it at both sides, and it grew still larger and more luminous; they lifted the body of the Youth into it, laying the Canary-bird upon his breast; the Basket rose into the air and hovered above the old Woman's head, and she followed the Will-o'-wisps on foot. The fair Lily took Mops on her arm, and followed the Woman; the Man with the Lamp concluded the procession; and the scene was curiously illuminated by these many lights.

But it was with no small wonder that the party saw, when they approached the River, a glorious arch mount over it, by which the helpful Snake was affording them a glittering path. If by day they had admired the beautiful transparent precious stones, of which the Bridge seemed formed; by night they were astonished at its gleaming brilliancy. On the upper side the clear circle marked itself sharp against the dark sky, but below, vivid beams were darting to the centre, and exhibiting the airy firmness of the edifice. The procession slowly moved across it; and the Ferryman, who saw it from his hut afar off, considered with astonishment the gleaming circle, and the strange lights which were passing over it.²⁴

No sooner had they reached the other shore, than the arch began, in its usual way, to swag up and down, and with a wavy motion to approach the water. The Snake then came on land, the Basket placed itself upon the ground, and the Snake again drew her circle round it. The old Man stooped towards her, and said: "What hast thou resolved on?"

"To sacrifice myself rather than be sacrificed," replied the Snake; "promise me that thou wilt leave no stone on shore."

The old Man promised; then addressing Lily: "Touch the Snake," said he, "with thy left hand, and thy lover with thy right." Lily knelt, and touched the Snake and the Prince's body. The latter in the instant

ing compliments from the Belles-Lettres Department), thou seest, have *fallen asleep!*—D. T.

²⁴ Well he might, worthy old man; as Pope Pius, for example, did, when he lived in Fontainebleau!—D. T. As our Bishops, when voting for the Reform Bill?—O. Y.

seemed to come to life; he moved in the Basket, nay he raised himself into a sitting posture; Lily was about to clasp him; but the old Man held her back, and himself assisted the Youth to rise, and led him forth from the Basket and the circle.

The Prince was standing; the Canary-bird was fluttering on his shoulder; there was life again in both of them, but the spirit had not yet returned; the fair Youth's eyes were open, yet he did not see, at least he seemed to look on all without participation. Scarcely had their admiration of this incident a little calmed, when they observed how strangely it had fared in the mean while with the Snake. Her fair taper body had crumbled into thousands and thousands of shining jewels: the old Woman reaching at her Basket had chanced to come against the circle; and of the shape or structure of the Snake there was now nothing to be seen, only a bright ring of luminous jewels was lying in the grass.²⁵

The old Man forthwith set himself to gather the stones into the Basket; a task in which his wife assisted him. They next carried the Basket to an elevated point on the bank; and here the man threw its whole lading, not without contradiction from the fair one and his wife, who would gladly have retained some part of it, down into the River. Like gleaming twinkling stars the stones floated down with the waves; and you could not say whether they lost themselves in the distance, or sank to the bottom.

"Gentlemen," said he with the Lamp, in a respectful tone to the Lights, "I will now show you the way, and open you the passage; but you will do us an essential service, if you please to unbolt the door, by which the Sanctuary must be entered at present, and which none but you can unfasten."

The Lights made a stately bow of assent, and kept their place. The old Man of the Lamp went foremost into the rock, which opened at his presence; the Youth followed him, as if mechanically; silent and uncertain, Lily kept at some distance from him; the old Woman would not be left, and stretched-out her hand, that the light of her husband's Lamp might still fall upon it. The rear was closed by the two Will-o'-wispes, who bent the peaks of their flames towards one another, and appeared to be engaged in conversation.

They had not gone far till the procession halted in front of a large brazen door, the leaves of which were bolted with a golden lock. The Man now called upon the Lights to advance; who required small entreaty, and with their pointed flames soon ate both bar and lock.

The brass gave a loud clang, as the doors sprang suddenly asunder; and the stately figures of the Kings appeared within the Sanctuary, illumi-

²⁵ So! Your Logics, Mechanical Philosophies, Politics, Sciences, your whole modern System of THOUGHT, is to deace; and old ENDEAVOUR, 'grasping at her basket,' shall 'come against' the inanimate remains, and 'only a bright ring of luminous jewels' shall be left there! Mark well, however, what next becomes of it.—D. T.

nated by the entering Lights. All bowed before these dread sovereigns, especially the Flames made a profusion of the daintiest reverences.

After a pause, the gold King asked: "Whence come ye?" "From the world," said the old Man.—"Whither go ye?" said the silver King. "Into the world," replied the Man.—"What would ye with us?" cried the brazen King. "Accompany you," replied the Man.

The composite King was about to speak, when the gold one addressed the Lights, who had got too near him: "Take yourselves away from me, my metal was not made for you." Thereupon they turned to the silver King, and clasped themselves about him; and his robe glittered beautifully in their yellow brightness. "You are welcome," said he, "but I cannot feed you; satisfy yourselves elsewhere, and bring me your light." They removed; and gliding past the brazen King, who did not seem to notice them, they fixed on the compounded King. "Who will govern the world?" cried he, with a broken voice. "He who stands upon his feet," replied the old Man.—"I am he," said the mixed King. "We shall see," replied the Man; "for the time is at hand."

The fair Lily fell upon the old Man's neck, and kissed him cordially. "Holy Sage!" cried she, "a thousand times I thank thee; for I hear that fateful word the third time." She had scarcely spoken, when she clasped the old Man still faster; for the ground began to move beneath them; the Youth and the old Woman also held by one another; the Lights alone did not regard it.

You could feel plainly that the whole temple was in motion; as a ship that softly glides away from the harbour, when her anchors are lifted; the depths of the Earth seemed to open for the Building as it went along. It struck on nothing; no rock came in its way.

For a few instants, a small rain seemed to drizzle from the opening of the dome; the old Man held the fair Lily fast, and said to her: "We are now beneath the River; we shall soon be at the mark." Ere long they thought the Temple made a halt; but they were in an error; it was mounting upwards.

And now a strange uproar rose above their heads. Planks and beams in disordered combination now came pressing and crashing in at the opening of the dome. Lily and the Woman started to a side; the Man with the Lamp laid hold of the Youth, and kept standing still. The little cottage of the Ferryman,—for it was this which the Temple in ascending had severed from the ground and carried up with it,—sank gradually down, and covered the old Man and the Youth.

The women screamed aloud, and the Temple shook, like a ship running unexpectedly aground. In sorrowful perplexity, the Princess and her old attendant wandered round the cottage in the dawn; the door was bolted, and to their knocking no one answered. They knocked more loudly, and were not a little struck, when at length the wood began to ring. By virtue of the Lamp locked up in it, the hut had been converted from the inside to the outside into solid silver. Ere long too its form changed; for the noble

metal shook aside the accidental shape of planks, posts and beams, and stretched itself out into a noble case of beaten ornamented workmanship. Thus a fair little temple stood erected in the middle of the large one; or if you will, an Altar worthy of the Temple.²⁶

By a staircase which ascended from within, the noble Youth now mounted aloft, lighted by the old Man with the Lamp; and, as it seemed, supported by another, who advanced in a white short robe, with a silver rudder in his hand; and was soon recognised as the Ferryman, the former possessor of the cottage.

The fair Lily mounted the outer steps, which led from the floor of the Temple to the Altar; but she was still obliged to keep herself apart from her Lover. The old Woman, whose hand in the absence of the Lamp had grown still smaller, cried: "Am I, then, to be unhappy after all? Among so many miracles, can there be nothing done to save my hand?" Her husband pointed to the open door, and said to her: "See, the day is breaking; haste, bathe thyself in the River."—"What an advice!" cried she; "it will make me all black; it will make me vanish altogether; for my debt is not yet paid."—"Go," said the Man, "and do as I advise thee; all debts are now paid."

The old Woman hastened away; and at that moment appeared the rising Sun, upon the rim of the dome. The old Man stepped between the Virgin and the Youth, and cried with a loud voice: "There are three which have rule on Earth; Wisdom, Appearance and Strength." At the first word, the gold King rose; at the second, the silver one; and at the third, the brass King slowly rose, while the mixed King on a sudden very awkwardly plumped down.²⁷

Whoever noticed him could scarcely keep from laughing, solemn as the moment was; for he was not sitting, he was not lying, he was not leaning, but shapelessly sunk together.²⁸

The Lights,²⁹ who till now had been employed upon him, drew to a side; they appeared, although pale in the morning radiance, yet once more well-fed, and in good burning condition; with their peaked tongues, they

²⁶ Good! The old Church, shaken down 'in disordered combination,' is admitted, in this way, into the new perennial Temple of the Future; and, clarified into enduring silver by the Lamp, becomes an Altar worthy to stand there. The Ferryman too is not forgotten.—D. T.

²⁷ Dost thou note this, O reader; and look back with new clearness on former thiogs? A gold King, a silver and a hrozen King: WISDOM, digoified APPEARANCE, STRENGTH; these three harmoniously united bear rule: *disharmoniously* cobbled together in sham union (as in the foolish composite King of our foolish 'transition era'), they, once the gold (or wisdom) is *all* out of them, 'very awkwardly plump down.'—D. T.

²⁸ As, for example, does not Charles X. (one of the poor fractional composite Realities emblemed herein) rest, even now, 'shapelessly enough sunk together,' at Holyrood, in the city of Edinburgh?—D. T.

²⁹ March-of-intellect Lights were well capable of such a thing.—D. T.

had dexterously licked-out the gold veins of the colossal figure to its very heart. The irregular vacuities which this occasioned had continued empty for a time, and the figure had maintained its standing posture. But when at last the very tenderest filaments were eaten out, the image crashed suddenly together; and that, alas, in the very parts which continue unaltered when one sits down; whereas the limbs, which should have bent, sprawled themselves out unbowed and stiff. Whoever *could* not laugh was obliged to turn away his eyes; this miserable shape and no-shape was offensive to behold.

The Man with the Lamp now led the handsome Youth, who still kept gazing vacantly before him, down from the Altar, and straight to the brazen King. At the feet of this mighty Potentate lay a sword in a brazen sheath. The young man girt it round him. "The sword on the left, the right free!" cried the brazen voice. They next proceeded to the silver King; he bent his sceptre to the Youth; the latter seized it with his left hand, and the King in a pleasing voice said: "Feed the sheep!" On turning to the golden King, he stooped with gestures of paternal blessing, and pressing his oaken garland on the young man's head, said: "Understand what is highest!"

During this progress, the old Man had carefully observed the Prince. After girding-on the sword, his breast swelled, his arms waved, and his feet trod firmer; when he took the sceptre in his hand, his strength appeared to soften, and by an unspeakable charm to become still more subduing; but as the oaken garland came to deck his hair, his features kindled, his eyes gleamed with inexpressible spirit, and the first word of his mouth was "Lily!"

"Dearest Lily!" cried he, hastening up the silver stairs to her, for she had viewed his progress from the pinnacle of the Altar; "Dearest Lily! what more precious can a man, equipt with all, desire for himself than innocence and the still affection which thy bosom brings me? O my friend!" continued he, turning to the old Man, and looking at the three statues; "glorious and secure is the kingdom of our fathers; but thou hast forgotten the fourth power, which rules the world, earlier, more universally, more certainly, the power of Love." With these words, he fell upon the lovely maiden's neck; she had cast away her veil, and her cheeks were tinged with the fairest, most imperishable red.

Here the old Man said with a smile: "Love does not rule; but it trains,³⁰ and that is more."

Amid this solemnity, this happiness and rapture, no one had observed that it was now broad day; and all at once, on looking through the open portal, a crowd of altogether unexpected objects met the eye. A large space surrounded with pillars formed the fore-court, at the end of which was seen a broad and stately Bridge stretching with many arches across the River. It was furnished, on both sides, with commodious and magnifi-

³⁰ It fashions (*bildet*), or educates.—O. Y.

cent colonnades for foot-travellers, many thousands of whom were already there, busily passing this way or that. The broad pavement in the centre was thronged with herds and mules, with horsemen and carriages, flowing like two streams, on their several sides, and neither interrupting the other. All admired the splendour and convenience of the structure; and the new King and his Spouse were delighted with the motion and activity of this great people, as they were already happy in their own mutual love.

"Remember the Snake in honour," said the Man with the Lamp; "thou owest her thy life; thy people owe her the Bridge, by which these neighbouring banks are now animated and combined into one land. Those swimming and shining jewels, the remains of her sacrificed body, are the piers of this royal bridge; upon these she has built and will maintain herself."³¹

The party were about to ask some explanation of this strange mystery, when there entered four lovely maidens at the portal of the Temple. By the Harp, the Parasol, and the Folding-stool, it was not difficult to recognise the waiting-maids of Lily; but the fourth, more beautiful than any of the rest, was an unknown fair one, and in sisterly sportfulness she hastened with them through the Temple, and mounted the steps of the Altar.³²

"Wilt thou have better trust in me another time, good wife?" said the Man with the Lamp to the fair one: "Well for thee, and every living thing that bathes this morning in the River!"

The renewed and beautified old Woman, of whose former shape no trace remained, embraced with young eager arms the Man with the Lamp, who kindly received her caresses. "If I am too old for thee," said he, smiling, "thou mayest choose another husband today; from this hour no marriage is of force, which is not contracted anew."

"Dost thou not know, then," answered she, "that thou too art grown younger?"—"It delights me if to thy young eyes I seem a handsome youth: I take thy hand anew, and am well content to live with thee another thousand years."³³

The Queen welcomed her new friend, and went down with her into the interior of the Altar, while the King stood between his two men, looking towards the Bridge, and attentively contemplating the busy tumult of the people.

But his satisfaction did not last; for ere long he saw an object which excited his displeasure. The great Giant, who appeared not yet to have awoken completely from his morning sleep, came stumbling along the

³¹ Honour to her indeed! The Mechanical Philosophy, though dead, has not died and lived in vain; but her works are there: 'upon these *she*' (THOUGHT, new-born, in glorified shape) 'has built herself and will maintain herself;' and the Natural and Supernatural shall henceforth, thereby, be one.—D. T.

³² Mark what comes of bathing in the TIME-River, at the entrance of a New Era!—D. T.

³³ And so REASON and ENDEAVOUR being once more married, and in the honey-moon, need we wish them joy?—D. T.

Bridge, producing great confusion all around him. As usual, he had risen stupefied with sleep, and had meant to bathe in the well-known bay of the River; instead of which he found firm land, and plunged upon the broad pavement of the Bridge. Yet although he reeled into the midst of men and cattle in the clumsiest way, his presence, wondered at by all, was felt by none; but as the sunshine came into his eyes, and he raised his hands to rub them, the shadows of his monstrous fists moved to and fro behind him with such force and awkwardness, that men and beasts were heaped together in great masses, were hurt by such rude contact, and in danger of being pitched into the River.³⁴

The King, as he saw this mischief, grasped with an involuntary movement at his sword; but he bethought himself, and looked calmly at his sceptre, then at the Lamp and the Rudder of his attendants. "I guess thy thoughts," said the Man with the Lamp; "but we and our gifts are powerless against this powerless monster. Be calm! He is doing hurt for the last time, and happily his shadow is not turned to us."

Meanwhile the Giant was approaching nearer; in astonishment at what he saw with open eyes, he had dropt his hands; he was now doing no injury, and came staring and agape into the fore-court.

He was walking straight to the door of the Temple, when all at once in the middle of the court, he halted, and was fixed to the ground. He stood there like a strong colossal statue, of reddish glittering stone, and his shadow pointed out the hours,³⁵ which were marked in a circle on the floor around him, not in numbers, but in noble and expressive emblems.

Much delighted was the King to see the monster's shadow turned to some useful purpose; much astonished was the Queen, who, on mounting from within the Altar, decked in royal pomp, with her virgins, first noticed the huge figure, which almost closed the prospect from the Temple to the Bridge.

Meanwhile the people had crowded after the Giant, as he ceased to move; they were walking round him, wondering at his metamorphosis. From him they turned to the Temple, which they now first appeared to notice,³⁶ and pressed towards the door.

At this instant the Hawk with the mirror soared aloft above the dome; caught the light of the Sun, and reflected it upon the group, which was standing on the Altar. The King, the Queen, and their attendants, in the dusky concave of the Temple, seemed illuminated by a heavenly splendour, and the people fell upon their faces. When the crowd had recovered and risen, the King with his followers had descended into the Altar, to proceed

³⁴ Thou rememberest the *Catholic Relief Bill*; witnesseth the *Irish Education Bill*? Hast heard, five hundred times, that the 'Church' was 'in Danger,' and now at length believest it?—D. T. Is D. T. of the Fourth Estate, and Popish-Infidel, then?—O. Y.

³⁵ Bravo!—D. T.

³⁶ Now first; when the beast of a SUPERSTITION-Giant has got his quietus. Right!—D. T.

by secret passages into his palace; and the multitude dispersed about the Temple to content their curiosity. The three Kings that were standing erect they viewed with astonishment and reverence; but the more eager were they to discover what mass it could be that was hid behind the hangings, in the fourth niche; for by some hand or another, charitable decency had spread over the resting-place of the fallen King a gorgeous curtain, which no eye can penetrate, and no hand may dare to draw aside.

The people would have found no end to their gazing and their admiration, and the crowding multitude would have even suffocated one another in the Temple, had not their attention been again attracted to the open space.

Unexpectedly some gold-pieces, as if falling from the air, came tinkling down upon the marble flags; the nearest passers-by rushed thither to pick them up; the wonder was repeated several times, now here, now there. It is easy to conceive that the shower proceeded from our two retiring Flames, who wished to have a little sport here once more, and were thus gaily spending, ere they went away, the gold which they had licked from the members of the sunken King. The people still ran eagerly about, pressing and pulling one another, even when the gold had ceased to fall. At length they gradually dispersed, and went their way; and to the present hour the Bridge is swarming with travellers, and the Temple is the most frequented on the whole Earth.³⁷

³⁷ It is the Temple of the whole civilised Earth. Finally, may I take leave to consider this *Mährchen* as the deepest Poem of its sort in existence; as the only true Prophecy emitted for who knows how many centuries?—D. T. Certainly: England is a free country.—O. Y.

No. 2.

NOVELLE.¹

BY GOETHE.

[1832.]

THE spacious courts of the Prince's Castle were still veiled in thick mists of an autumnal morning; through which veil, meanwhile, as it melted into clearness, you could more or less discern the whole Hunter-company, on horseback and on foot, all busily astir. The hasty occupations of the nearest were distinguishable: there was lengthening, shortening of stirrup-leathers; there was handing of rifles and shot-pouches, there was putting of game-bags to rights; while the hounds, impatient in their leashes, threatened to drag their keepers off with them. Here and there, too, a horse showed spirit more than enough; driven-on by its fiery nature, or excited by the spur of its rider, who even now in the half-dusk could not repress a certain self-complacent wish to exhibit himself. All waited, however, on the Prince, who, taking leave of his young Consort, was now delaying too long.

United a short while ago, they already felt the happiness of consentaneous dispositions; both were of active vivid character; each willingly participated in the tastes and endeavours of the other. The Prince's father had already, in his time, discerned and improved the season when it became evident that all members of the commonwealth should pass their days in equal industry; should all, in equal working and producing, each in his kind, first earn, and then enjoy.

How well this had prospered was visible in these very days, when the chief market was a-holding, which you might well enough have named a fair. The Prince yestereven had led his Princess on horseback through the tumult of the heaped-up wares; and pointed out to her how, on this spot, the Mountain region met the Plain country in profitable barter: he could here, with the objects before him, awaken her attention to the various industry of his Land.

If the Prince at this time occupied himself and his servants almost exclusively with these pressing concerns, and in particular worked incessantly with his Finance-minister, yet would the Huntmaster too have his right; on whose pleading, the temptation could not be resisted to under-

¹ FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 34.

take, in this choice autumn weather, a Hunt that had already been postponed; and so for the household itself, and for the many stranger visitants, prepare a peculiar and singular festivity.

The Princess stayed behind with reluctance: but it was proposed to push far into the Mountains, and stir-up the peaceable inhabitants of the forests there with an unexpected invasion.

At parting, her lord failed not to propose a ride for her, with Friedrich, the Prince-Uncle, as escort: "I will leave thee," said he, "our Honorio too, as Equerry and Page, who will manage all." In pursuance of which words, he, in descending, gave to a handsome young man the needful injunctions; and soon thereafter disappeared with guests and train.

The Princess, who had waved her handkerchief to her husband while still down in the court, now retired to the back apartments, which commanded a free prospect towards the Mountains; and so much the lovelier, as the Castle itself stood on a sort of elevation, and thus, behind as well as before, afforded manifold magnificent views. She found the fine telescope still in the position where they had left it yestereven, when amusing themselves over bush and hill and forest-summit, with the lofty ruins of the primeval Stammburg, or Family Tower; which in the clearness of evening stood out noteworthy, as at that hour with its great light-and-shade masses, the best aspect of so venerable a memorial of old time was to be had. This morning too, with the approximating glasses, might be beautifully seen the autumnal tinge of the trees, many in kind and number, which had struggled up through the masonry, unhindered and undisturbed during long years. The fair dame, however, directed the tube somewhat lower, to a waste stony flat, over which the Hunting-train was to pass: she waited the moment with patience, and was not disappointed; for with the clearness and magnifying power of the instrument her glancing eyes plainly distinguished the Prince and the Head-Equerry; nay she forbore not again to wave her handkerchief, as some momentary pause and looking-back was fancied perhaps, rather than observed.

Prince-Uncle, Friedrich by name, now with announcement entered, attended by his Painter, who carried a large portfolio under his arm. "Dear Cousin," said the hale old gentleman, "we here present you with the Views of the Stammburg, taken on various sides to show how the mighty Pile, warred-on and warring, has from old time fronted the year and its weather; how here and there its wall had to yield, here and there rush down into waste ruins. However, we have now done much to make the wild mass accessible; for more there wants not to set every traveller, every visitor, into astonishment, into admiration."

As the Prince now exhibited the separate leaves, he continued: "Here where, advancing up the hollow-way, through the outer ring-walls, you reach the Fortress proper, rises against us a rock, the firmest of the whole mountain; on this there stands a tower built,—yet where Nature leaves off, and Art and Handicraft begin, no one can distinguish. Farther you perceive, sideways, walls abutting on it, and donjons terrace-wise stretch-

ing down. But I speak wrong; for, to the eye, it is but a wood that encircles that old summit: these hundred-and-fifty years no axe has sounded there, and the massiest stems have on all sides sprung up; wherever you press inwards to the walls, the smooth maple, the rough oak, the taper pine, with trunk and roots oppose you; round these we have to wind, and pick our footsteps with skill. Do but look how artfully our Master has brought the character of it on paper; how the roots and stems, the species of each distinguishable, twist themselves among the masonry, and the huge boughs come looping through the holes. It is a wilderness like no other; an accidentally unique locality, where ancient traces of the long-vanished power of Man, and the ever-living, ever-working power of Nature show themselves in the most earnest conflict."

Exhibiting another leaf, he went on: "What say you now to the Castle-court, which, become inaccessible by the falling-in of the old gate-tower, had for immemorial time been trodden by no foot? We sought to get at it by a side; have pierced through walls, blasted vaults asunder, and so provided a convenient but secret way. Inside it needed no clearance; here stretches a flat rock-summit, smoothed by Nature: but yet strong trees have, in spots, found luck and opportunity for rooting themselves there; they have softly but decidedly grown up, and now stretch out their boughs into the galleries where the knights once walked to and fro; nay through the doors and windows into the vaulted halls; out of which we would not drive them: they have even got the mastery, and may keep it. Sweeping away deep strata of leaves, we have found the notablest place, all smoothed, the like of which were perhaps not to be met with in the world.

"After all this, however, it is still to be remarked, and on the spot itself well worth examining, how on the steps that lead up to the main tower, a maple has struck root and fashioned itself to a stout tree, so that you hardly can with difficulty press by it, to mount the battlements and gaze over the unbounded prospect. Yet here too, you linger pleased in the shade; for that tree is it which, high over the whole, wondrously lifts itself into the air.

"Let us thank the brave Artist, then, who so deservingly in various pictures teaches us the whole, even as if we saw it: he has spent the fairest hours of the day and of the season therein, and for weeks long kept moving about these scenes. Here in this corner has there been, for him and the warder we gave him, a pleasant little dwelling fitted up. You could not think, my Best, what a lovely outlook into the country, into court and walls, he has got there. But now when all is once in outline, so pure, so characteristic, he may finish it down here at his ease. With these pictures we will decorate our garden-hall; and no one shall recreate his eyes over our regular parterres, our groves and shady walks, without wishing himself up there, to follow, in actual sight of the old and of the new, of the stubborn, inflexible, indestructible, and of the fresh, pliant, irresistible, what reflections and comparisons would rise for him."

Honorio entered, with notice that the horses were brought out; then

said the Princess, turning to the Uncle: "Let us ride up; and you will show me in reality what you have here set before me in image. Ever since I came among you, I have heard of this undertaking; and now should like, of all things, to see with my own eyes what in the narrative seemed impossible, and in the depicting remains improbable."—"Not yet, my Love," answered the Prince: "What you here saw is what it can become and is becoming; for the present, much in the enterprise stands still amid impediments; Art must first be complete, if Nature is not to shame it."—"Then let us ride at least upwards, were it only to the foot: I have the greatest wish today to look about me far in the world."—"Altogether as you will," replied the Prince.—"Let us ride through the Town, however," continued the Lady, "over the great marketplace, where stands the innumerable crowd of booths, looking like a little city, like a camp. It is as if the wants and occupations of all the families in the land were turned outwards, assembled in this centre, and brought into the light of day: for the attentive observer can descry whatsoever it is that man performs and needs; you fancy, for the moment, there is no money necessary, that all business could here be managed by barter, and so at bottom it is. Since the Prince, last night, set me on these reflections, it is pleasant to consider how here, where Mountain and Plain meet together, both so clearly speak out what they require and wish. For as the highlander can fashion the timber of his woods into a hundred shapes, and mould his iron for all manner of uses, so these others from below come to meet him with most manifold wares, in which often you can hardly discover the material or recognise the aim."

"I am aware," answered the Prince, "that my Nephew turns his utmost care to these things; for specially, on the present occasion, this main point comes to be considered, that one receive more than one gives out: which to manage is, in the long-run, the sum of all Political Economy, as of the smallest private housekeeping. Pardon me, however, my Best: I never like to ride through markets; at every step you are hindered and kept back; and then flames-up in my imagination the monstrous misery which, as it were, burnt itself into my eyes, when I witnessed one such world of wares go off in fire. I had scarcely got to——"

"Let us not lose the bright hours," interrupted the Princess; for the worthy man had already more than once afflicted her with the minute description of that mischance: how he, being on a long journey, resting in the best inn, on the marketplace which was just then swarming with a fair, had gone to bed exceedingly fatigued; and in the night-time been, by shrieks, and flames rolling up against his lodging, hideously awakened.

The Princess hastened to mount her favourite horse: and led, not through the backgate upwards, but through the foregate downwards, her reluctant-willing attendant; for who but would gladly have ridden by her side, who but would gladly have followed after her? And so Honorio too had, without regret, stayed back from the otherwise so wished-for Hunt, to be exclusively at her service.

As was to be anticipated, they could only ride through the market step by step : but the fair Lovely one enlivened every stoppage by some sprightly remark ; " I repeat my lesson of yesternight," said she, " since Necessity is trying our patience." And in truth, the whole mass of men so crowded about the riders, that their progress was slow. The people gazed with joy at the young dame ; and on so many smiling countenances might be read the pleasure they felt to see that the first woman in the land was also the fairest and gracefulest.

Promiscuously mingled stood Mountaineers, who had built their still dwellings amid rocks, firs and spruces ; Lowlanders from hills, meadows and leas ; craftsmen of the little towns ; and what else had all assembled there. After a quiet glance, the Princess remarked to her attendant, how all these, whencesoever they came, had taken more stuff than necessary for their clothes, more cloth and linen, more ribands for trimming. It is as if the women could not be bushy enough, the men not puffy enough, to please themselves.

" We will leave them that," answered the Uncle : " spend his superfluity on what he will, a man is happy in it ; happiest when he therewith decks and dizens himself." The fair dame nodded assent.

So had they, by degrees, got upon a clear space, which led out to the suburbs ; when, at the end of many small booths and stands, a larger edifice of boards showed itself, which was scarcely glanced at till an ear-lacerating bellow sounded forth from it. The feeding-hour of the wild-beasts, there exhibited, seemed to have come : the Lion let his forest- and desert-voice be heard in all vigour ; the horses shuddered, and all had to remark how, in the peaceful ways and workings of the cultivated world, the king of the wilderness so fearfully announced himself. Coming nearer the booth, you could not overlook the variegated colossal pictures representing with violent colours and strong emblems those foreign beasts ; to a sight of which the peaceful burgher was to be irresistibly enticed. The grim monstrous tiger was pouncing on a blackamoor, on the point of tearing him in shreds ; a lion stood earnest and majestic, as if he saw no prey worthy of him ; other wondrous particoloured creatures, beside these mighty ones, deserved less attention.

" As we come back," said the Princess, " we will alight and take a nearer view of these gentry."—" It is strange," observed the Prince, " that man always seeks excitement by Terror. Inside, there, the Tiger lies quite quiet in his cage ; and here must he ferociously dart upon a black, that the people may fancy the like is to be seen within : of murder and sudden death, of burning and destruction, there is not enough, but balladsingers must at every corner keep repeating it. Good man will have himself frightened a little ; to feel the better, in secret, how beautiful and laudable it is to draw breath in freedom."

Whatever of apprehensiveness from such bugbear images might have remained, was soon all and wholly effaced, as, issuing through the gate, our party entered on the cheerfulest of scenes. The road led first up the

River, as yet but a small current, and bearing only light boats, but which by and by, as a renowned world-stream, would carry forth its name and waters, and enliven distant lands. They proceeded next through well-cultivated fruit-gardens and pleasure-grounds, softly ascending; and by degrees you could look about you, in the now disclosed, much-peopled region; till first a thicket, then a little wood admitted our riders, and the gracefulest localities refreshed and limited their view. A meadow-vale leading upwards, shortly before mown for the second time, velvet-like to look upon, and watered by a brook rushing briskly out copious at once from the uplands above, received them as with welcome; and so they approached a higher freer station; which, on issuing from the wood, after a stiff ascent, they gained; and could now descry, over new clumps of trees, the old Castle, the goal of their pilgrimage, rising in the distance, as pinnacle of the rock and forest. Backwards, again (for never did one mount hither without turning round), they caught, through accidental openings of the high trees, the Prince's Castle, on the left, lightened by the morning sun; the well-built higher quarter of the Town, softened under light smoke-clouds; and so on, rightwards, the under Town, the River in several bendings, with its meadows and mills; on the farther side, an extensive fertile region.

Having satisfied themselves with the prospect, or rather, as usually happens when we look round from so high a station, become doubly eager for a wider, less limited view, they rode on, over a broad stony flat, where the mighty Ruin stood fronting them, as a green-crowned summit, a few old trees far down about its foot: they rode along; and so arrived there, just at the steepest, most inaccessible side. Great rocks jutting out from old, insensible of every change, firm, well-founded, stood clenched together there; and so it towered upwards; what had fallen at intervals lay in huge plates and fragments confusedly heaped, and seemed to forbid the boldest any attempt. But the steep, the precipitous is inviting to youth: to undertake it, to storm and conquer it, is for young limbs an enjoyment. The Princess testified desire for an attempt; Honorio was at her hand; the Prince-Uncle, if easier to satisfy, took it cheerfully, and would show that he too had strength: the horses were to wait below among the trees; our climbers make for a certain point, where a huge projecting rock affords standing-room, and a prospect, which indeed is already passing over into the bird's-eye kind, yet folds itself together there picturesquely enough.

The sun, almost at its meridian, lent the clearest light; the Prince's Castle, with its compartments, main buildings, wings, domes and towers, lay clear and stately; the upper Town in its whole extent; into the lower also you could conveniently look, nay by the telescope distinguish the booths in the marketplace. So futhersome an instrument Honorio would never leave behind: they looked at the River upwards and downwards; on this side, the mountainous, terrace-like, interrupted expanse, on that the upswelling, fruitful land, alternating in level and low hill; places innumerable; for it was long customary to dispute how many of them were here to be seen.

Over the great expanse lay a cheerful stillness, as is common at noon; when, as the Ancients were wont to say, Pan is asleep, and all Nature holds her breath not to awaken him.

"It is not the first time," said the Princess, "that I, on some such high far-seeing spot, have reflected how Nature, all clear, looks so pure and peaceful, and gives you the impression as if there were nothing contradictory in the world; and yet when you return back into the habitation of man, be it lofty or low, wide or narrow, there is ever somewhat to contend with, to battle with, to smooth and put to rights."

Honorio, who meanwhile was looking through the glass at the Town, exclaimed, "See! see! There is fire in the market!" They looked, and could observe some smoke; the flames were smothered in the daylight. "The fire spreads!" cried he, still looking through the glass: the mischief indeed now became noticeable to the good eyes of the Princess; from time to time you observed a red burst of flame, the smoke mounted aloft; and Prince-Uncle said: "Let us return; that is not good; I always feared I should see that misery a second time." They descended, got back to their horses. "Ride," said the Princess to the Uncle, "fast, but not without a groom: leave me Honorio; we will follow without delay." The Uncle felt the reasonableness, nay necessity of this; and started off down the waste stony slope, at the quickest pace the ground allowed.

As the Princess mounted, Honorio said: "Please your Excellency to ride slow! In the Town as in the Castle, the fire-apparatus is in perfect order; the people, in this unexpected accident, will not lose their presence of mind. Here, moreover, we have bad ground, little stones and short grass; quick riding is unsafe; in any case, before we arrive, the fire will be got under." The Princess did not think so; she observed the smoke spreading, she fancied that she saw a flame flash up, that she heard an explosion; and now in her imagination all the terrific things awoke, which the worthy Uncle's repeated narrative of his experiences in that market-conflagration had too deeply implanted there.

Frightful doubtless had that business been; alarming and impressive enough to leave behind it, painfully through life long, a boding and image of its recurrence,—when in the night-season, on the great booth-covered market-space, a sudden fire had seized booth after booth, before the sleepers in these light huts could be shaken out of deep dreams: the Prince himself, as a wearied stranger arriving only for rest, started from his sleep, sprang to the window, saw all fearfully illuminated; flame after flame, from the right, from the left, darting through each other, rolls quivering towards him. The houses of the marketplace, reddened in the shine, seemed already glowing; threatened every moment to kindle, and burst forth in fire. Below, the element raged without let; planks cracked, laths crackled; the canvas flew abroad, and its dusky fire-peaked tatters whirled themselves round and aloft,—as if bad spirits, in their own element, with perpetual change of shape, were in capricious dance, devouring one another, and there and yonder, would dart-up out from their penal fire. And then,

with wild howls, each saved what was at hand : servants and masters laboured to drag forth bales already seized by the flames ; to snatch away yet somewhat from the burning shelves, and pack it into the chests, which too they must at last leave a prey to the hastening flame. How many a one could have prayed but for a moment's pause to the loud-advancing fire ; as he looked round for the possibility of some device, and was with all his possessions already seized ! On the one side, there burnt and glowed already what, on the other, still stood in dark night. Obstinate characters, will-strong men, grimly fronted the grim foe ; and saved much, with loss of their eyebrows and hair.—Alas, all this waste confusion now arose anew before the fair spirit of the Princess ; the gay morning prospect was all overclouded, and her eyes darkened ; wood and meadow had put on a look of strangeness, of danger.

Entering the peaceful vale, heeding little its refreshing coolness, they were but a few steps onwards from the copious fountain of the brook which flowed by them, when the Princess descried, quite down in the thickets, something singular, which she soon recognised for the tiger : springing on, as she a short while ago had seen him painted, he came towards her ; and this image, added to the frightful ones she was already busy with, made the strangest impression. “ Fly, your Grace ! ” cried Honorio, “ fly ! ” She turned her horse towards the steep hill they had just descended. The young man, rushing on towards the monster, drew his pistol and fired when he thought himself near enough ; but, alas, without effect ; the tiger sprang to a side, the horse faltered, the provoked wild-beast followed his course, upwards straight after the Princess. She galloped, what her horse could, up the steep stony space ; scarcely apprehending that so delicate a creature, unused to such exertion, could not hold out. It overdid itself, driven on by the necessitated Princess ; it stumbled on the loose gravel of the steep, and again stumbled ; and at last fell, after violent efforts, powerless to the ground. The fair dame, resolute and dexterous, failed not instantly to get upon her feet ; the horse too rose, but the tiger was approaching ; though not with vehement speed ; the uneven ground, the sharp stones seemed to damp his impetuosity ; and only Honorio flying after him, riding with checked speed along with him, appeared to stimulate and provoke his force anew. Both runners, at the same instant, reached the spot where the Princess was standing by her horse : the Knight bent himself, fired, and with this second pistol hit the monster through the head, so that it rushed down ; and now, stretched out in full length, first clearly disclosed the might and terror whereof only the bodily hull was left lying. Honorio had sprung from his horse ; was already kneeling on the beast, quenching its last movements, and held his drawn hanger in his right hand. The youth was beautiful ; he had come dashing on, as, in sports of the lance and the ring, the Princess had often seen him do. Even so in the riding-course would his bullet, as he darted by, hit the Turk's-head on the pole, right under the turban in the brow ; even so would he, lightly prancing up, prick his naked sabre into the fallen mass, and lift it from the ground. In

all such arts he was dexterous and felicitous ; both now stood him in good stead.

"Give him the rest," said the Princess : "I fear he will hurt you with his claws."—"Pardon!" answered the youth : "he is already dead enough ; and I would not hurt the skin, which next winter shall shine upon your sledge."—"Sport not," said the Princess : "whatsoever of pious feeling dwells in the depth of the heart unfolds itself in such a moment."—"I too," cried Honorio, "was never more pious than even now ; and therefore do I think of what is joyfulest : I look at the tiger's fell only as it can attend you to do you pleasure."—"It would forever remind me," said she, "of this fearful moment."—"Yet is it," replied the youth with glowing cheeks, "a more harmless spoil than when the weapons of slain enemies are carried for show before the victor."—"I shall bethink me, at sight of it, of your boldness and cleverness ; and need not add, that you may reckon on my thanks and the Prince's favour for your life long. But rise ; the beast is clean dead ; let us consider what is next : before all things rise!"—"As I am once on my knees," replied the youth, "once in a posture which in other circumstances would have been forbid, let me beg at this moment to receive assurance of the favour, of the grace which you vouchsafe me. I have already asked so often of your high Consort for leave and promotion to go on my travels. He who has the happiness to sit at your table, whom you honour with the privilege to entertain your company, should have seen the world. Travellers stream-in on us from all parts ; and when a town, an important spot in any quarter of the world comes in course, the question is sure to be asked of us, Were we ever there ? Nobody allows one sense, till one has seen all that : it is as if you had to instruct yourself only for the sake of others."

"Rise!" repeated the Princess : "I were loath to wish or request aught that went against the will of my Husband ; however, if I mistake not, the cause why he has restrained you hitherto will soon be at an end. His intention was to see you ripened into a complete self-guided nobleman, to do yourself and him credit in foreign parts, as hitherto at court ; and I should think this deed of yours was as good a recommendatory passport as a young man could wish for, to take abroad with him."

That, instead of a youthful joy, a certain mournfulness came over his face, the Princess had not time to observe, nor had he to indulge his emotion ; for, in hot haste, up the steep, came a woman, with a boy at her hand, straight to the group so well known to us ; and scarcely had Honorio, bethinking him, arisen, when they howling and shrieking cast themselves on the carcass ; by which action, as well as by their cleanly, decent, yet particoloured and unusual dress, might be gathered that it was the mistress of this slain creature, and the black-eyed, black-locked boy, holding a flute in his hand, her son ; weeping like his mother, less violent, but deeply moved, kneeling beside her.

Now came strong outbursts of passion from this woman ; interrupted indeed, and pulse-wise ; a stream of words, leaping like a stream in gushes

from rock to rock. A natural language, short and discontinuous, made itself impressive and pathetic: in vain should we attempt translating it into our dialects; the approximate purport of it we must not omit. "They have murdered thee, poor beast! murdered without need! Thou wert tame, and wouldst fain have lain down at rest and waited our coming; for thy foot-balls were sore, thy claws had no force left. The hot sun to ripen them was wanting. Thou wert the beautifullest of thy kind: who ever saw a kingly tiger so gloriously stretched-out in sleep, as thou here liest, dead, never to rise more? When thou awokest in the early dawn of morning, and openedst thy throat, stretching out thy red tongue, thou wert as if smiling on us; and even when bellowing, thou tookest thy food from the hands of a woman, from the fingers of a child. How long have we gone with thee on thy journeys; how long has thy company been useful and fruitful to us! To us, to us of a very truth, meat came from the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. So will it be no more. Woe! woe!"

She had not done lamenting, when over the smoother part of the Castle Mountain came riders rushing down; soon recognised as the Prince's Hunting-train, himself the foremost. Following their sport, in the backward hills, they had observed the fire-vapours; and fast through dale and ravine, as in fierce chase, taken the shortest path towards this mournful sign. Galloping along the stony vacancy, they stopped and stared at sight of the unexpected group, which in that empty expanse stood out so mark-worthy. After the first recognition, there was silence; some pause of breathing-time, and then what the view itself did not impart, was with brief words explained. So stood the Prince, contemplating the strange unheard-of incident; a circle round him of riders, and followers that had run on foot. What to do was still undetermined; the Prince intent on ordering, executing; when a man pressed forward into the circle; large of stature, particoloured, wondrously apparelled, like wife and child. And now the family, in union, testified their sorrow and astonishment. The man, however, soon restrained himself; bowed in reverent distance before the Prince, and said: "It is not the time for lamenting; alas, my lord and mighty hunter, the Lion too is loose; hither towards the mountains is he gone: but spare him, have mercy, that he perish not like this good beast."

"The Lion!" said the Prince: "Hast thou the trace of him?"—"Yes, Lord! A peasant down there, who had heedlessly taken shelter on a tree, directed me farther up this way, to the left; but I saw the crowd of men and horses here; anxious for tidings of assistance, I hastened hither."—"So then," commanded the Prince, "draw to the left, Huntsmen; you will load your pieces, go softly to work; if you drive him into the deep woods, it is no matter: but in the end, good man, we shall be obliged to kill your animal: why were you improvident enough to let him loose?"—"The fire broke out," replied he; "we kept quiet and attentive; it spread fast, but at a distance from us; we had water enough for our defence; but a heap of powder blew up, and threw the brands on to us, and over our heads; we were too hasty, and are now ruined people."

The Prince was still busy directing; but for a moment all seemed to pause, as a man was observed hastily springing down from the heights of the old Castle; whom the troop soon recognised for the watchman that had been stationed there to keep the Painter's apartment, while he lodged there and took charge of the workmen. He came running, out of breath, yet in few words soon made known, That the Lion had laid himself down, within the high ring-wall, in the sunshine, at the foot of a large beech, and was behaving quite quietly. With an air of vexation, however, the man concluded: "Why did I take my rifle to town yesternight, to have it cleaned? he had never risen again, the skin had been mine, and I might all my life have had the credit of the thing."

The Prince, whom his military experiences here also stood in stead, for he had before now been in situations where from various sides inevitable evil seemed to threaten, said hereupon: "What surety do you give me that if we spare your Lion, he will not work destruction among us, among my people?"

"This woman and this child," answered the father hastily, "engage to tame him, to keep him peaceable, till I bring up the cage, and then we can carry him back unharmed and without harming any one."

The boy put his flute to his lips; an instrument of the kind once named soft, or sweet flutes; short-beaked like pipes: he, who understood the art, could bring out of it the gracefulest tones. Meanwhile the Prince had inquired of the watchman how the lion came up. "By the hollow-way," answered he, "which is walled-in on both sides, and was formerly the only entrance, and is to be the only one still: two footpaths, which led in elsewhere, we have so blocked-up and destroyed that no human being, except by that first narrow passage, can reach the Magic Castle which Prince Friedrich's talent and taste is making of it."

After a little thought, during which the Prince looked round at the boy, who still continued as if softly preluding, he turned to Honorio, and said: "Thou hast done much today, complete thy task. Secure that narrow path; keep your rifles in readiness, but do not shoot till the creature can no otherwise be driven back: in any case, kindle a fire, which will frighten him if he make downwards. The man and woman take charge of the rest." Honorio rapidly bestirred himself to execute these orders.

The child continued his tune, which was no tune; a series of notes without law, and perhaps even on that account so heart-touching: the bystanders seemed as if enchanted by the movement of a song-like melody, when the father with dignified enthusiasm began to speak in this sort:

"God has given the Prince wisdom, and also knowledge to discern that all God's works are wise, each after its kind. Behold the rock, how he stands fast and stirs not, defies the weather and the sunshine; primeval trees adorn his head, and so crowned he looks abroad; neither if a mass rush away, will this continue what it was, but falls broken into many pieces and covers the side of the descent. But there too they will not tarry, capriciously they leap far down, the brook receives them, to the river he

bears them. Not resisting, not contradictory, angular; no, smooth and rounded they travel now quicker on their way, arrive, from river to river, finally at the ocean, whither march the giants in hosts, and in the depths whereof dwarfs are busy.

"But who shall exalt the glory of the Lord, whom the stars praise from Eternity to Eternity! Why look ye far into the distance? Consider here the bee: late at the end of harvest she still busily gathers; builds her a house, tight of corner, straight of wall, herself the architect and mason. Behold the ant: she knows her way, and loses it not; she piles her a dwelling of grass-halms, earth-crumbs, and needles of the fir; she piles it aloft and arches it in; but she has laboured in vain, for the horse stamps, and scrapes it all in pieces: lo! he has trodden-down her beams, and scattered her planks; impatiently he snorts, and cannot rest; for the Lord has made the horse comrade of the wind and companion of the storm, to carry man whither he wills, and woman whither she desires. But in the Wood of Palms arose he, the Lion; with earnest step traversed the wildernesses; there rules he over all creatures; his might who shall withstand? Yet man can tame him; and the fiercest of living things has reverence for the image of God, in which too the angels are made, who serve the Lord and his servants. For in the den of Lions Daniel was not afraid; he remained fast and faithful, and the wild bellowing interrupted not his song of praise."

This speech, delivered with expression of a natural enthusiasm, the child accompanied here and there with graceful tones; but now, the father having ended, he, with clear melodious voice and skilful passaging, struck-up his warble; whereupon the father took the flute, and gave note in unison, while the child sang:

From the Dens, I, in a deeper,
Prophet's song of praise can hear;
Angel-host he hath for keeper,
Needs the good man there to fear?

Lion, Lioness, agazing,
Mildly pressing round him came;
Yea, that humble, holy praising,
It hath made them tame.

The father continued, accompanying this strophe with his flute; the mother here and here touched-in as second voice.

Impressive, however, in a quite peculiar degree, it was, when the child now began to shuffle the lines of the strophe into other arrangement; and thereby if not bring out a new sense, yet heighten the feeling by leading it into self-excitement:

Angel-host around doth hover,
Us in heavenly tones to cheer;
In the Dens our head doth cover,—
Needs the poor child there to fear?

For that humble holy praising
Will permit no evil nigh :
Angels hover, watching, gazing ;
Who so safe as I ?

Hereupon with emphasis and elevation began all three :

For th' Eternal rules above us,
Lands and oceans rules his will ;
Lions even as lambs shall love us,
And the proudest waves be still.

Whetted sword to scabbard cleaving,
Faith and Hope victorious see :
Strong, who, loving and believing,
Prays, O Lord, to thee.

All were silent, hearing, hearkening ; and only when the tones ceased could you remark and distinguish the impression they had made. All was as if appeased ; each affected in his way. The Prince, as if he now first saw the misery that a little ago had threatened him, looked down on his spouse, who leaning on him forbore not to draw out the little embroidered handkerchief, and therewith covered her eyes. It was blessedness for her to feel her young bosom relieved from the pressure with which the preceding minutes had loaded it. A perfect silence reigned over the crowd ; they seemed to have forgotten the dangers : the conflagration below ; and above, the rising-up of a dubiously-reposing Lion.

By a sign to bring the horses, the Prince first restored the group to motion ; he turned to the woman, and said : “ You think, then, that, once find the Lion, you could, by your singing, by the singing of this child, with help of these flute-tones, appease him, and carry him back to his prison, unhurt and hurting no one ? ” They answered Yes, assuring and affirming ; the castellan was given them as guide. And now the Prince started off in all speed with a few ; the Princess followed slower, with the rest of the train : mother and son, on their side, under conduct of the warder, who had got himself a musket, mounted on the steeper part of the height.

Before the entrance of the hollow-way which opened their access to the Castle, they found the hunters busy heaping-up dry brushwood, to have, in any case, a large fire ready for kindling. “ There is no need,” said the woman : “ it will all go well and peaceably, without that.”

Farther on, sitting on a wall, his double-barrel resting in his lap, Honorio appeared ; at his post, as if ready for every occurrence. However, he seemed hardly to notice our party ; he sat as if sunk in deep thoughts, he looked round like one whose mind was not there. The woman addressed him with a prayer not to let the fire be lit ; he appeared not to heed her words ; she spoke on with vivacity, and cried : “ Handsome young man, thou hast killed my tiger, I do not curse thee ; spare my lion, good young man, I will bless thee.”

Honorio was looking straight out before him, to where the sun on his course began to sink. "Thou lookest to the west," cried the woman; "thou dost well, there is much to do there; hasten, delay not, thou wilt conquer. But first conquer thyself." At this he appeared to give a smile; the woman stepped on; could not, however, but look back once more at him: a ruddy sun was irradiating his face; she thought she had never seen a handsomer youth.

"If your child," said the warder now, "with his fluting and singing, can, as you are persuaded, entice and pacify the Lion, we shall soon get mastery of him after, for the creature has lain down quite close to the perforated vaults through which, as the main passage was blocked up with ruins, we had to bore ourselves an entrance into the Castle-court. If the child entice him into this latter, I can close the opening with little difficulty; then the boy, if he like, can glide out by one of the little spiral stairs he will find in the corner. We must conceal ourselves; but I shall so take my place that a rifle-ball can, at any moment, help the poor child in case of extremity."

"All these precautions are unnecessary; God and skill, piety and a blessing, must do the work."—"May be," replied the warder; "however, I know my duties. First, I must lead you, by a difficult path, to the top of the wall, right opposite the vaults and opening I have mentioned: the child may then go down, as into the arena of the show, and lead away the animal, if it will follow him." This was done: warder and mother looked down in concealment, as the child descending the screw-stairs, showed himself in the open space of the Court, and disappeared opposite them in the gloomy opening; but forthwith gave his flute voice, which by and by grew weaker, and at last sank dumb. The pause was bodeful enough; the old hunter, familiar with danger, felt heart-sick at the singular conjuncture; the mother, however, with cheerful face, bending over to listen, showed not the smallest discomposure.

At last the flute was again heard; the child stepped forth from the cavern with glittering satisfied eyes, the Lion after him, but slowly, and as it seemed with difficulty. He showed here and there desire to lie down; yet the boy led him in a half-circle through the few disleaved many-tinted trees, till at length, in the last rays of the sun, which poured in through a hole in the ruins, he set him down, as if transfigured in the bright red light; and again commenced his pacifying song, the repetition of which we also cannot forbear:

From the Dens, I, in a deeper,
Prophet's song of praise can hear;
Angel-host he hath for keeper,
Needs the good man there to fear?

Lion, Lioness, agazing,
Mildly pressing round him came;
Yea, that humble, holy praising,
It hath made them tame.

Meanwhile the Lion had laid itself down quite close to the child, and lifted its heavy right fore-paw into his bosom; the boy as he sung gracefully stroked it; but was not long in observing that a sharp thorn had stuck itself between the balls. He carefully pulled it out; with a smile, took the particoloured silk-handkerchief from his neck, and bound up the frightful paw of the monster; so that his mother for joy bent herself back with outstretched arms; and perhaps, according to custom, would have shouted and clapped applause, had not a hard hand-grip of the warder reminded her that the danger was not yet over.

Triumphantly the child sang on, having with a few tones preluded :

For th' Eternal rules above us,
Lands and oceans rules his will;
Lions even as lambs shall love us,
And the proudest waves be still.

Whetted sword to scabbard cleaving,
Faith and Hope victorious see :
Strong, who, loving and believing,
Prays, O Lord, to thee.

Were it possible to fancy that in the countenance of so grim a creature, the tyrant of the woods, the despot of the animal kingdom, an expression of friendliness, of thankful contentment could be traced, then here was such traceable; and truly the child, in his illuminated look, had the air as of a mighty triumphant victor; the other figure, indeed, not that of one vanquished, for his strength lay concealed in him; but yet of one tamed, of one given up to his own peaceful will. The child fluted and sang on, changing the lines according to his way, and adding new :

And so to good children bringeth
Blessed Angel help in need;
Fetters o'er the cruel flingeth,
Worthy act with wings doth speed.

So have tamed, and firmly iron'd
To a poor child's feeble knee,
Him the forest's lordly tyrant,
Pious Thought and Melody.

SUMMARY OF VOL. IV.

SUMMARY.

BIOGRAPHY.

BIOGRAPHY, or human insight into human personality, the basis of all that can interest a human creature. (p. 3.)—Conversation, almost wholly biographic and autobiographic. Even in Art and highest Art, we can nowise forget the Artist; the biographic interest inevitably comprising its deepest and noblest meaning. History, in its best and truest form, the essence of innumerable Biographies. Modern 'Histories' of the Philosophic kind; and their dreary interminable vacuity. Fictitious Narratives, or mimic Biographies: The inspired Speaker, and the uninspired Babbler. The Foolishest of existing mortals. (4.)—Sauerteig on the indispensability and significance of Reality. The old Mythologies were once Philosophies, and the old Epics *believed* Histories. Imagination but a poor affair when it has to part company with Understanding. Belief, the first condition of all spiritual Force whatsoever. Dreary modern Epics; and their uncredited, incredible Supernatural 'Machinery.' Even the *probable*, however skilfully wrought, is but the Shadow of some half-seen Reality. A whole epitome of the Infinite lies enfolded in the Life of every Man. Not the material, only the Seer and Poet wanting. Great is Invention, but that is but a poor sort with which Belief is not concerned: Its highest exercise, not to invent Fiction; but to invent or bring forth *new Truth*. Interest of the smallest historical *fact*, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious* event: Momentary glimpse of an actual, living Peasant of the year 1651: The Past all holy to us: The poorest adventure of some poorest Outcast, after seventy years are come and gone, has meaning and unfathomable instruction for us. (9.)—Secret for being graphic: An open loving Heart the beginning of all knowledge. Literary froth, and literary substance: The multitudinous men, women and children, that make up the Army of British Authors. James Boswell: White of Selborne. One good Biography in England, *Boswell's Johnson*. (17.)

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

Mr. Croker's editorial peculiarities and deficiencies. (p. 25.)—Boswell, a man whose bad qualities lay open to the general eye: What great and genuine good was in him, nowise so self-evident. His true *Hero-worship* for poor rusty-coated, rough old Samuel Johnson. His uncouth symbolic

relation to his decrepit, death-sick Era. That loose-flowing, careless-looking Work of his, a picture by one of Nature's own Artists. His grand intellectual talent an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach and significance than Logic. Poor Bozzy an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. Johnson's own Writings stand on a quite inferior level to this *Johnsoniad* of Boswell: It shows us objects that in very deed existed; it is all *true*. (32.)—What a pathetic, sacred, in every sense poetic meaning is implied in that one word, *Past!* This Book of Boswell's will give us more real insight into the History of England during those days, than any book taking upon itself that special aim. Robertson's 'History of Scotland.' How 'Histories' are written. Boswell's conversational jottings, no infringement of social privacy. Man properly an *incarnated* Word: Out of Silence comes strength. Thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is harmless? (43.)—Our interest in Biography considerably modified by the dull servile imitancy of mankind. Significant resemblances of Men and Sheep. Mystic power of Imitancy and Association. Amid the dull millions are scattered here and there leading, original natures; with eye to *see*, and will to *do*. Such Men properly the synopsis and epitome of the age in which they live; whose Biographies are above all things worth having. Of such chosen men, although of their humbler ranks, was Samuel Johnson; his existence no idle Dream, but a Reality which he transacted *awake*. As the highest Gospel was a Biography, so is the Life of every good man still an indubitable Gospel. (52.)—The Contradiction of Inward and Outward, which yawns wide enough in every Life, in Johnson's wider than in most. His calling by nature, rather towards Active than Speculative life; as a Doer of Work, he had shone even more than as Speaker of the Word. His disposition for *royalty* in his early boyhood. College life; proud as the proudest, poor as the poorest: 'Mistaken' estimate of Christian Scholarship. Usher-ship at Market Bosworth: Bread and water of affliction, so bitter that he could not swallow them. Tries Literature. His kind, true, brave-hearted Wife. Young gentlemen boarded, and taught. Privations and trials of Authorship: Its transition period, from the protection of Patrons to that of the Public. Johnson the first Author of any significance, who faithfully lived by the day's work of his craft: His sturdy rebellion against the Chesterfield 'encumbrances.' (57.)—Johnson's Era wholly divided against itself. How was a noble man, resolute for the Truth, to act in it? Glory to our brave Samuel, who once more gave the world assurance of a Man! Wrong, not only different from Right, but infinitely different: Johnson's Religion as the light of life to him. His rugged literary labours: His insignificant-looking 'Parliamentary Debates,' the origin of our stupendous Fourth Estate. So poor is he, his Wife must leave him, and seek shelter among other relations: Could not remember the day he had passed free from pain: Manfully makes the best of his hard lot. The fantastic article called 'Fame,' of little other than a poor market value. Thy Fame! Unhappy mortal, where will it and thou be in some fifty years? (71.)—Gradually a

little circle gathers round the Wise man. In his fifty-third year, he is benefited by royal bounty. Real Primate of all England. The *last* of many things, Johnson was the last genuine English Tory. The highest Courage not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully. Johnson's talent of silence: Where there is nothing farther to be *done*, there shall nothing more be *said*. His thorough Truthfulness, and clear hatred of every form of Cant. Few men have had a more merciful, tenderly affectionate nature than rough old Samuel. Catherine Chambers's death-bed: The marketplace at Uttoxeter. Johnson's Politeness: His Prejudices: His culture and sympathies wholly English. Samuel Johnson and David Hume, embodiments of the two grand spiritual Antagonisms of their time: Whoso should combine the intrepid Candour, and decisive scientific Clearness of the one, with the Reverence, Love and devout Humility of the other, were the whole man of a new time. (86.)

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